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The works of Mrs. Hemans

Felicia Dorothea Browne Hemans, Mrs. Hughes

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THE VESPERS OF PALERMO,
RECORDS OF WOMAN,
with other Poems.

Cwm near St. Asaph.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS,

EDINBURGH & LONDON.

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THE WORKS

OF

Felicia Dorothea (Browne)

MRS HEMANS;

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HER LIFE,

BY

HER SISTER.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.
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THE VESPERS OF PALERMO.

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COUNT DI PROCIDA.
RAIMOND DI PROCIDA, *his Son.*
ERIBERT, *Viceroy.*
DE COUCI.
MONTALBA.
GUIDO.
ALBERTI.
ANSELMO, *a Monk.*

VITTORIA.
CONSTANCE, *Sister to Eribert.*

Nobles, Soldiers, Messengers, Vassals, Peasants, &c. &c.

SCENE—*Palermo.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Valley, with Vineyards and Cottages. Groups of Peasants*—PROCIDA, *disguised as a Pilgrim, among them.*

1*st Pea.* Ay, this was wont to be a festal time
In days gone by! I can remember well

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The old familiar melodies that rose
At break of morn, from all our purple hills,
To welcome in the vintage. Never since
Hath music seem'd so sweet. But the light hearts
Which to those measures beat so joyously,
Are tamed to stillness now. There is no voice
Of joy through all the land.

2d Pea. Yes! there are sounds
Of revelry within the palaces,
And the fair castles of our ancient lords,
Where now the stranger banquets. Ye may hear
From *thence* the peals of song and laughter rise
At midnight's deepest hour.

3d Pea. Alas! we sat,
In happier days, so peacefully beneath
The olives and the vines our fathers rear'd,
Encircled by our children, whose quick steps
Flew by us in the dance! The time hath been
When peace was in the hamlet, wheresoe'er
The storm might gather. But this yoke of France
Falls on the peasant's neck as heavily
As on the crested chieftain's. We are bow'd
E'en to the earth.

Pea.'s Child. My father, tell me when
Shall the gay dance and song again resound
Amidst our chestnut-woods, as in those days
Of which thou'rt wont to tell the joyous tale?

1st Pea. When there are light and reckless hearts once more
In Sicily's green vales. Alas! my boy,
Men meet not now to quaff the flowing bowl,
To hear the mirthful song, and cast aside

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The weight of work-day care: they meet to speak
Of wrongs and sorrows, and to whisper thoughts
They dare not breathe aloud.
Pro. (*from the background.*) Ay, it is well
So to relieve th' o'erburthen'd heart, which pants
Beneath its weight of wrongs; but better far
In silence to avenge them!
An Old Pea. What deep voice
Came with that startling tone?
1*st Pea.* It was our guest's,
The stranger pilgrim who hath sojourn'd here
Since yester-morn. Good neighbours mark him well:
He hath a stately bearing, and an eye
Whose glance looks through the heart. His mien accords
Ill with such vestments. How he folds around him
His pilgrim-cloak, e'en as it were a robe
Of knightly ermine! That commanding step
Should have been used in courts and camps to move.
Mark him!
Old Pea. Nay, rather, mark him not; the times
Are fearful, and they teach the boldest hearts
A cautious lesson. What should bring him here?
A Youth. He spoke of vengeance!
Old Pea. Peace! we are beset
By snares on every side, and we must learn
In silence and in patience to endure.
Talk not of vengeance, for the word is death.
Pro. (*coming forward indignantly.*) The word is death! And what hath life for *thee*,

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That thou shouldst cling to it thus? thou abject thing!
Whose very soul is moulded to the yoke,
And stamp'd with servitude. What! is it life
Thus at a breeze to start, to school thy voice
Into low fearful whispers, and to cast
Pale jealous looks around thee, lest, e'en then,
Strangers should catch its echo?—Is there aught
In *this* so precious, that thy furrow'd cheek
Is blanch'd with terror at the passing thought
Of hazarding some few and evil days,
Which drag thus poorly on?

Some of the Peas. Away, away!
Leave us, for there is danger in thy presence.

Pro. Why, what is danger? Are there deeper ills
Than those ye bear thus calmly? Ye have drain'd
The cup of bitterness till naught remains
To fear or shrink from—therefore, be ye strong!
Power dwelleth with despair. Why start ye thus
At words which are but echoes of the thoughts
Lock'd in your secret souls? Full well I know,
There is not one among you, but hath nursed
Some proud indignant feeling, which doth make
One conflict of his life. I know *thy* wrongs,
And thine—and thine; but if within your breast
There is no chord that vibrates to *my* voice,
Then fare ye well.

A Youth (*coming forward.*) No, no! say on, say on!
There are still free and fiery hearts e'en here,
That kindle at thy words.

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Pea. If that indeed
Thou hast a hope to give us——
Pro. There is hope
For all who suffer with indignant thoughts
Which work in silent strength. What! think ye Heaven
O'erlooks the oppressor, if he bear awhile
His crested head on high? I tell you, no!
Th' avenger will not sleep. It was an hour
Of triumph to the conqueror, when our king,
Our young brave Conradin, in life's fair morn
On the red scaffold died. Yet not the less
Is Justice throned above; and her good time
Comes rushing on in storms: that royal blood
Hath lifted an accusing voice from earth,
And hath been heard. The traces of the past
Fade in *man's* heart, but ne'er doth Heaven forget.
Pea. Had we but arms and leaders, we are men
Who might earn vengeance yet; but wanting these,
What wouldst thou have us do?
Pro. Be vigilant;
And when the signal wakes the land, arise!
The peasant's arm is strong, and there shall be
A rich and noble harvest. Fare ye well.
[*Exit* PROCIDA.
1*st Pea.* This man should be a prophet: how he seem'd
To read our hearts with his dark searching glance
And aspect of command! and yet his garb
Is mean as ours.
2*d Pea.* Speak low; I know him well.
At first his voice disturb'd me, like a dream

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Of other days, but I remember now
His form, seen oft when in my youth I served
Beneath the banners of our kings! 'Tis he
Who hath been exiled and proscribed so long,
The Count di Procida.

Pea. And is this he?
Then Heaven protect him! for around his steps
Will many snares be set.

1*st Pea.* He comes not thus
But with some mighty purpose—doubt it not;
Perchance to bring us freedom. He is one,
Whose faith, through many a trial, hath been proved
True to our native princes. But away!
The noontide heat is past, and from the seas
Light gales are wandering through the vineyards; now
We may resume our toil. [*Exeunt Peasants.*

Scene II.—*The Terrace of a Castle.*

Eribert, Vittoria.

Vit. Have I not told thee, that I bear a heart
Blighted and cold?—Th' affections of my youth
Lie slumbering in the grave; their fount is closed,
And all the soft and playful tenderness
Which hath its home in woman's breast, ere yet
Deep wrongs have sear'd it—all is fled from mine.
Urge me no more.

Eri. O lady! doth the flower
That sleeps entomb'd through the long wintry storms,
Unfold its beauty to the breath of spring,

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And shall not woman's heart, from chill despair,
Wake at love's voice?

Vit. Love!—make *love's* name thy spell,
And I am strong!—the very word calls up
From the dark past, thoughts, feelings, powers array'd
In arms against thee! Know'st thou *whom* I loved
While my soul's dwelling-place was still on earth?
One who was born for empire, and endow'd
With such high gifts of princely majesty,
As bow'd all hearts before him! Was he not
Brave, royal, beautiful? And such he died;
He died!—hast thou forgotten?—And thou'rt here,
Thou meet'st my glance with eyes which coldly look'd,
—Coldly!—nay, rather with triumphant gaze,
Upon his murder!—Desolate as I am,
Yet in the mien of *thine* affianced bride,
Oh! my lost Conradin! there should be still
Somewhat of loftiness, which might o'erawe
The hearts of thine assassins.

Eri. Haughty dame!
If thy proud heart to tenderness be closed,
Know, danger is around thee: thou hast foes
That seek thy ruin, and my power alone
Can shield thee from their arts.

Vit. Provençal, tell
Thy tale of danger to some happy heart
Which hath its little world of loved ones round,
For whom to tremble; and its tranquil joys
That make earth Paradise. I stand alone;
—They that are blest may fear.

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Eri. Is there not one
Who ne'er commands in vain? Proud lady, bend
Thy spirit to thy fate; for know that he,
Whose car of triumph in its earthquake path,
O'er the bow'd neck of prostrate Sicily,
Hath borne him to dominion; he, my king,
Charles of Anjou, decrees thy hand the boon
My deeds have well deserved; and who hath power
Against his mandates?

Vit. Viceroy, tell thy lord
That, e'en where chains lie heaviest on the land,
Souls may not all be fetter'd. Oft, ere now,
Conquerors have rock'd the earth, yet fail'd to tame
Unto their purposes that restless fire
Inhabiting man's breast. A spark bursts forth,
And so they perish! 'Tis the fate of those
Who sport with lightning—and it may be his.
Tell him I fear him not, and thus am free.

Eri. 'Tis well. Then nerve that lofty heart to bear
The wrath which is not powerless. Yet again
Bethink thee, lady! Love may change—*hath* changed
To vigilant hatred oft, whose sleepless eye
Still finds what most it seeks for. Fare thee well.
—Look to it yet!—To-morrow I return.

[*Exit* ERIBERT.

Vit. To-morrow!—Some ere now have slept and dreamt
Of morrows which ne'er dawn'd—or ne'er for them;
So silently their deep and still repose
Hath melted into death! Are there not balms

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In nature's boundless realm, to pour out sleep
Like this on me? Yet should my spirit still
Endure its earthly bonds, till it could bear
To *his* a glorious tale of his own isle,
Free and avenged.— *Thou* shouldst be now at work,
In wrath, my native Etna! who dost lift
Thy spiry pillar of dark smoke so high,
Through the red heaven of sunset!—sleep'st thou still,
With all thy founts of fire, while spoilers tread
The glowing vales beneath?
[PROCIDA *enters, disguised.*
Ha! who art thou,
Unbidden guest, that with so mute a step
Dost steal upon me?
Pro. One, o'er whom hath pass'd
All that can change man's aspect! Yet not long
Shalt thou find safety in forgetfulness.
I am he, to breathe whose name is perilous,
Unless thy wealth could bribe the winds to silence.
—Know'st thou *this*, lady? [*He shows a ring.*
Vit. Righteous heaven! the pledge
Amidst his people from the scaffold thrown
By him who perish'd, and whose kingly blood
E'en yet is unatoned. My heart beats high—
—Oh, welcome, welcome! thou art Procida,
Th' Avenger, the Deliverer!
Pro. Call me so,
When my great task is done. Yet who can tell
If the return'd *be* welcome? Many a heart
Is changed since last we met.

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Vit. Why dost thou gaze,
With such a still and solemn earnestness,
Upon my alter'd mien?
Pro. That I may read
If to the widow'd love of Conradin,
Or the proud Eribert's triumphant bride,
I now intrust my fate.
Vit. Thou, Procida!
That *thou* shouldst wrong me thus!—prolong thy gaze
Till it hath found an answer.
Pro. 'Tis enough.
I find it in thy cheek, whose rapid change
Is from death's hue to fever's; in the wild
Unsettled brightness of thy proud dark eye,
And in thy wasted form. Ay, 'tis a deep
And solemn joy, thus in thy looks to trace,
Instead of youth's gay bloom, the characters
Of noble suffering: on thy brow the same
Commanding spirit holds its native state,
Which could not stoop to vileness. Yet the voice
Of Fame hath told afar, that thou shouldst wed
This tyrant Eribert.
Vit. And told it not
A tale of insolent love repell'd with scorn,
Of stern commands and fearful menaces
Met with indignant courage? Procida!
It was but now that haughtily I braved
His sovereign's mandate, which decrees my hand,
With its fair appanage of wide domains
And wealthy vassals, a most fitting boon,
To recompense his crimes.—I smiled—ay, smiled—

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In proud security; for the high of heart
Have still a pathway to escape disgrace,
Though it be dark and lone.
Pro. Thou shalt not need
To tread its shadowy mazes. Trust my words:
I tell thee that a spirit is abroad
Which will not slumber, till its path be traced
By deeds of fearful fame. Vittoria, live!
It is most meet that thou *shouldst* live, to see
The mighty expiation; for thy heart
(Forgive me that I wrong'd its faith!) hath nursed
A high, majestic grief, whose seal is set
Deep on thy marble brow.
Vit. Then thou *canst* tell,
By gazing on the wither'd rose, that there
Time, or the blight, hath work'd! Ay, this is in
Thy vision's scope: but oh! the things unseen,
Untold, undreamt of, which like shadow's pass
Hourly o'er that mysterious world, a mind
To ruin struck by grief! Yet doth my soul,
Far midst its darkness, nurse one soaring hope,
Wherein is bright vitality. 'Tis to see
His blood avenged, and his fair heritage,
My beautiful native land, in glory risen,
Like a warrior from his slumbers!
Pro. Hear'st thou not
With what a deep and ominous moan the voice
Of our great mountain swells? There will be soon
A fearful burst! Vittoria! brood no more
In silence o'er thy sorrows, but go forth
Amidst thy vassals, (yet be secret still,)
And let thy breath give nurture to the spark

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Thou'lt find already kindled. I move on
In shadow, yet awakening in my path
That which shall startle nations. Fare thee well.
Vit. When shall we meet again? — Are we not those
Whom most he loved on earth, and think'st thou not
That love e'en yet shall bring his spirit near
While thus we hold communion?
Pro. Yes, I feel
Its breathing influence whilst I look on thee,
Who wert its light in life. Yet will we not
Make womanish tears our offering on his tomb;
He shall have nobler tribute!—I must hence,
But thou shalt soon hear more. Await the time.
[*Exeunt separately.*

Scene III.—*The Sea-Shore.*

Raimond di Procida, Constance.

Con. There is a shadow far within your eye,
Which hath of late been deepening. You were wont,
Upon the clearness of your open brow,
To wear a brighter spirit, shedding round
Joy like our southern sun. It is not well,
If some dark thought be gathering o'er your soul,
To hide it from affection. Why is this?
My Raimond, why is this?
Raim. Oh! from the dreams
Of youth, sweet Constance, hath not manhood still
A wild and stormy wakening? They depart—

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Light after light, our glorious visions fade,
The vaguely beautiful! till earth, unveil'd,
Lies pale around; and life's realities
Press on the soul, from its unfathom'd depth
Rousing the fiery feelings, and proud thoughts,
In all their fearful strength! 'Tis ever thus,
And doubly so with me; for I awoke
With high aspirings, making it a curse
To breathe where noble minds are bow'd, as here.
—To breathe!—It is not breath!

Con. I know thy grief,
—And is't not mine?—for those devoted men
Doom'd with their life to expiate some wild word,
Born of the social hour. Oh! I have knelt,
E'en at my brother's feet, with fruitless tears,
Imploring him to spare. His heart is shut
Against my voice; yet will I not forsake
The cause of mercy.

Raim. Waste not thou thy prayers,
Oh, gentle love, for them. There's little need
For pity, though the galling chain be worn
By some few slaves the less. Let them depart!
There is a world beyond the oppressor's reach,
And thither lies their way.

Con. Alas! I see
That some new wrong hath pierced you to the soul.

Raim. Pardon, belovèd Constance, if my words,
From feelings hourly stung, have caught, perchance,
A tone of bitterness. Oh! when thine eyes,
With their sweet eloquent thoughtfulness, are fix'd

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Thus tenderly on mine, I should forget
All else in their soft beams; and yet I came
To tell thee——

Con. What? What wouldst thou say? Oh speak!
Thou wouldst not leave me!

Raim. I have cast a cloud,
The shadow of dark thoughts and ruin'd fortunes,
O'er thy bright spirit. Haply, were I gone,
Thou wouldst resume thyself, and dwell once more,
In the clear sunny light of youth and joy,
E'en as before we met—before we loved!

Con. This is but mockery. Well thou know'st thy love
Hath given me nobler being; made my heart
A home for all the deep sublimities
Of strong affection; and I would not change
Th' exalted life I draw from that pure source,
With all its chequer'd hues of hope and fear,
E'en for the brightest calm. Thou most unkind!
Have I deserved this?

Raim. Oh! thou hast deserved
A love less fatal to thy peace than mine.
Think not 'tis mockery! But I cannot rest
To be the scorn'd and trampled thing I am
In this degraded land. Its very skies,
That smile as if but festivals were held
Beneath their cloudless azure, weigh me down
With a dull sense of bondage, and I pine
For freedom's charter'd air. I would go forth
To seek my noble father: he hath been
Too long a lonely exile, and his name

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Seems fading in the dim obscurity
Which gathers round my fortunes.
Con. Must we part?
And is it come to this? Oh! I have still
Deem'd it enough of joy with *thee* to share
E'en grief itself. And now! But this is vain.
Alas! too deep, too fond, is woman's love:
Too full of hope, she casts on troubled waves
The treasures of her soul!
Raim. Oh! speak not thus!
Thy gentle and desponding tones fall cold
Upon my inmost heart. I leave thee but
To be more worthy of a love like thine;
For I have dreamt of fame! A few short years,
And we may yet be blest.
Con. A few short years!
Less time may well suffice for death and fate
To work all change on earth; to break the ties
Which early love had form'd; and to bow down
Th' elastic spirit, and to blight each flower
Strewn in life's crowded path! But be it so!
Be it enough to know that happiness
Meets thee on other shores.
Raim. Where'er I roam,
Thou shalt be with my soul! Thy soft low voice
Shall rise upon remembrance, like a strain
Of music heard in boyhood, bringing back
Life's morning freshness. Oh! that there should be
Things which we love with such deep tenderness,
But, through that love, to learn how much of woe
Dwells in one hour like this! Yet weep thou not!
We shall meet soon; and many days, dear love!
Ere I depart.

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Con. Then there's a respite still.
Days!—not a day but in its course may bring
Some strange vicissitude to turn aside
Th' impending blow we shrink from.—Fare thee well. (*Returning.*)
—Oh, Raimond! this is not our *last* farewell!
Thou wouldst not so deceive me?
Raim. Doubt me not,
Gentlest and best beloved! we meet again.
[*Exit* CONSTANCE.
Raim. (*after a pause.*) When shall I breathe in freedom, and give scope
To those untameable and burning thoughts,
And restless aspirations, which consume
My heart i' th' land of bondage? Oh! with you,
Ye everlasting images of power,
And of infinity! thou blue-rolling deep,
And you, ye stars! whose beams are characters
Wherewith the oracles of fate are traced—
With you my soul finds room, and casts aside
The weight that doth oppress her. But my thoughts
Are wandering far; there should be one to share
This awful and majestic solitude
Of sea and heaven with me.
[PROCIDA *enters unobserved.*
It is the hour
He named, and yet he comes not.
Pro. (*coming forward.*) He is here.
Raim. Now, thou mysterious stranger—thou, whose glance
Doth fix itself on memory, and pursue
Thought like a spirit, haunting its lone hours—
Reveal thyself; what art thou?

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Pro. One whose life
Hath been a troubled stream, and made its way
Through rocks and darkness, and a thousand storms,
With still a mighty aim. But now the shades
Of eve are gathering round me, and I come
To this, my native land, that I may rest
Beneath its vines in peace.

Raim. Seek'st thou for peace?
This is no land of peace: unless that deep
And voiceless terror, which doth freeze men's thoughts
Back to their source, and mantle its pale mien
With a dull hollow semblance of repose,
May so be call'd.

Pro. There are such calms full oft
Preceding earthquakes. But I have not been
So vainly school'd by fortune, and inured
To shape my course on peril's dizzy brink,
That it should irk my spirit to put on
Such guise of hushed submissiveness as best
May suit the troubled aspect of the times.

Raim. Why, then, thou art welcome, stranger, to the land
Where most disguise is needful.—He were bold
Who now should wear his thoughts upon his brow
Beneath Sicilian skies. The brother's eye
Doth search distrustfully the brother's face;
And friends, whose undivided lives have drawn
From the same past their long remembrances,
Now meet in terror, or no more; lest hearts
Full to o'erflowing, in their social hour,
Should pour out some rash word, which roving winds

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Might whisper to our conquerors. This it is,
To wear a foreign yoke.
Pro. It matters not
To him who holds the mastery o'er his spirit,
And can suppress its workings, till endurance
Becomes as nature. We can tame ourselves
To all extremes, and there is that in life
To which we cling with most tenacious grasp,
Even when its lofty aims are all reduced
To the poor common privilege of breathing.
—Why dost thou turn away?
Raim. What wouldst thou with me?
I deem'd thee, by th' ascendant soul which lived
And made its throne on thy commanding brow,
One of a sovereign nature, which would scorn
So to abase its high capacities
For aught on earth. But thou art like the rest.
What wouldst thou with me?
Pro. I would counsel thee.
Thou must do that which men—ay, valiant men—
Hourly submit to do; in the proud court,
And in the stately camp, and at the board
Of midnight revellers, whose flush'd mirth is all
A strife, won hardly. Where is he whose heart
Lies bare, through all its foldings, to the gaze
Of mortal eye? If vengeance wait the foe,
Or fate th' oppressor, 'tis in depths conceal'd
Beneath a smiling surface.—Youth, I say,
Keep thy soul down! Put on a mask!—'tis worn
Alike by power and weakness, and the smooth
And specious intercourse of life requires
Its aid in every scene.

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Raim. Away, dissembler!
Life hath its high and its ignoble tasks,
Fitted to every nature. Will the free
And royal eagle stoop to learn the arts
By which the serpent wins his spell-bound prey?
It is because I *will* not clothe myself
In a vile garb of coward semblances,
That now, e'en now, I struggle with my heart,
To bid what most I love a long farewell,
And seek my country on some distant shore,
Where such things are unknown!

Pro. (*exultingly.*) Why, this is joy:
After a long conflict with the doubts and fears,
And the poor subtleties, of meaner minds,
To meet a spirit, whose bold elastic wing
Oppression hath not crush'd. High-hearted youth,
Thy father, should his footsteps e'er again
Visit these shores——

Raim. My father! what of him?
Speak! was he known to thee?

Pro. In distant lands
With him I've traversed many a wild, and look'd
On many a danger; and the thought that thou
Wert smiling then in peace, a happy boy,
Oft through the storm hath cheer'd him.

Raim. Dost thou deem
That still he lives? Oh! if it be in chains,
In woe, in poverty's obscurest cell,
Say but he lives—and I will track his steps
E'en to earth's verge!

Pro. It may be that he lives,
Though long his name hath ceased to be a word

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Familiar in man's dwellings. But its sound
May yet be heard! Raimond di Procida,
Rememberest thou thy father?

Raim. From my mind
His form hath faded long, for years have pass'd
Since he went forth to exile: but a vague,
Yet powerful image of deep majesty,
Still dimly gathering round each thought of him,
Doth claim instinctive reverence; and my love
For his inspiring name hath long become
Part of my being.

Pro. Raimond! doth no voice
Speak to thy soul, and tell thee whose the arms
That would enfold thee now? My son! my son!

Raim. Father! Oh God!—my father! Now I know
Why my heart woke before thee!

Pro. Oh! this hour
Makes hope reality; for thou art all
My dreams had pictured thee!

Raim. Yet why so long
E'en as a stranger hast thou cross'd my paths,
One nameless and unknown?—and yet I felt
Each pulse within me thrilling to thy voice.

Pro. Because I would not link thy fate with mine,
Till I could hail the dayspring of that hope
Which now is gathering round us. Listen, youth!
Thou hast told *me* of a subdued and scorn'd
And trampled land, whose very soul is bow'd
And fashion'd to her chains:—but *I* tell *thee*
Of a most generous and devoted land,
A land of kindling energies; a land

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Of glorious recollections!—proudly true
To the high memory of her ancient kings,
And rising, in majestic scorn, to cast
Her alien bondage off!

Raim. And where is this?

Pro. Here, in our isle, our own fair Sicily!
Her spirit is awake, and moving on,
In its deep silence mightier, to regain
Her place amongst the nations; and the hour
Of that tremendous effort is at hand.

Raim. Can it be thus indeed? Thou pour'st new life
Through all my burning veins! I am as one
Awakening from a chill and death-like sleep
To the full glorious day.

Pro. Thou shalt hear more!
Thou shalt hear things which would—which *will*, arouse
The proud free spirits of our ancestors
E'en from their marble rest. Yet mark me well!
Be secret!—for along my destined path
I yet must darkly move.—Now, follow me,
And join a band of men, in whose high hearts
There lies a nation's strength.

Raim. My noble father!
Thy words have given me all for which I pined—
An aim, a hope, a purpose! And the blood
Doth rush in warmer currents through my veins,
As a bright fountain from its icy bonds
By the quick sun-stroke freed.

Pro. Ay, this is well!
Such natures burst men's chains!—Now, follow me.

[*Exeunt.*

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ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Apartment in a Palace.*

ERIBERT, CONSTANCE.

Con. Will you not hear me? Oh! that they who need
Hourly forgiveness—they who do but live
While mercy's voice, beyond th' eternal stars,
Wins the great Judge to listen, should be thus,
In their vain exercise of pageant power,
Hard and relentless! Gentle brother, yet
'Tis in your choice to imitate that heaven,
Whose noblest joy is pardon.
Eri. 'Tis too late.
You have a soft and moving voice, which pleads
With eloquent melody—but they must die.
Con. What!—die!—for words?—for breath, which leaves no trace
To sully the pure air, wherewith it blends,
And is, being utter'd, gone? Why, 'twere enough
For such a venial fault to be deprived
One little day of man's free heritage,
Heaven's warm and sunny light! Oh! if you deem
That evil harbours in their souls, at least
Delay the stroke, till guilt, made manifest,
Shall bid stern justice wake.
Eri. I am not one
Of those weak spirits, that timorously keep watch
For fair occasions, thence to borrow hues
Of virtue for their deeds. My school hath been
Where power sits crown'd and arm'd. And, mark me, sister!

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To a distrustful nature it might seem
Strange, that your lips thus earnestly should plead
For these Sicilian rebels. O'er *my* being
Suspicion holds no power. And yet, take note—
I have said, and they must die.

Con. Have you no fear?

Eri. Of what?—that heaven should fall?

Con. No!—But that earth
Should arm in madness. Brother! I have seen
Dark eyes bent on you, e'en midst festal throngs,
With such deep hatred settled in their glance,
My heart hath died within me.

Eri. Am I then
To pause, and doubt, and shrink, because a girl,
A dreaming girl, hath trembled at a look?

Con. Oh! looks are no illusions, when the soul,
Which may not speak in words, can find no way
But theirs to liberty! Have not these men
Brave sons, or noble brothers?

Eri. Yes! whose name
It rests with me to make a word of fear—
A sound forbidden midst the haunts of men.

Con. But not forgotten! Ah! beware, beware
—Nay, look not sternly on me. There is one
Of that devoted band, who yet will need
Years to be ripe for death. He is a youth,
A very boy, on whose unshaded cheek
The spring-time glow is lingering. 'Twas but now
His mother left me, with a timid hope
Just dawning in her breast: and I—I dared
To foster its faint spark. You smile!—Oh! then
He will be saved!

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Eri. Nay, I but smiled to think
What a fond fool is Hope! She may be taught
To deem that the great sun will change his course
To work her pleasure, or the tomb give back
Its inmates to her arms. In sooth, 'tis strange!
Yet, with your pitying heart, you should not thus
Have mock'd the boy's sad mother: I have said—
You should not thus have *mock'd* her!—Now fare-
well! [*Exit* ERIBERT.

Con. O brother! hard of heart!—for deeds like
these
There must be fearful chastening, if on high
Justice doth hold her state. And I must tell
Yon desolate mother that her fair young son
Is thus to perish! Haply the dread tale
May slay *her* too—for heaven is merciful.
—'Twill be a bitter task! [*Exit* CONSTANCE.

SCENE II.—*A ruined Tower, surrounded by Woods.*

PROCIDA, VITTORIA.

Pro. Thy vassals are prepared, then?

Vit. Yes; they wait
Thy summons to their task.

Pro. Keep the flame bright,
But hidden till this hour. Wouldst thou dare, lady,
To join our councils at the night's mid-watch,
In the lone cavern by the rock-hewn cross?

Vit. What should I shrink from?

Pro. Oh! the forest paths
Are dim and wild, e'en when the sunshine streams
Through their high arches; but when powerful night

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Comes, with her cloudy phantoms, and her pale
Uncertain moonbeams, and the hollow sounds
Of her mysterious winds; their aspect *then*
Is of another and more fearful world—
A realm of indistinct and shadowy forms,
Waking strange thoughts almost too much for this—
Our frail terrestrial nature.

Vit. Well I know
All this, and more. Such scenes have been th' abodes
Where through the silence of my soul have pass'd
Voices, and visions from the sphere of those
That have to die no more! Nay, doubt it not!
If such unearthly intercourse hath e'er
Been granted to our nature, 'tis to hearts
Whose love is with the dead. They, they alone,
Unmadden'd could sustain the fearful joy
And glory of its trances! At the hour
Which makes guilt tremulous, and peoples earth
And air with infinite viewless multitudes,
I will be with thee, Procida.

Pro. Thy presence
Will kindle nobler thoughts, and, in the souls
Of suffering and indignant men, arouse
That which may strengthen our majestic cause
With yet a deeper power. Know'st thou the spot?

Vit. Full well. There is no scene so wild and lone,
In these dim woods, but I have visited
Its tangled shades.

Pro. At midnight, then, we meet.

[*Exit* PROCIDA.

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Vit. Why should I fear? Thou wilt be with me, thou,
Th' immortal dream and shadow of my soul,
Spirit of him I love! that meet'st me still
In loneliness and silence; in the noon
Of the wild night, and in the forest depths,
Known but to me; for whom thou giv'st the winds
And sighing leaves a cadence of thy voice,
Till my heart faints with that o'erthrilling joy!
—Thou wilt be with me there, and lend my lips
Words, fiery words, to flush dark cheeks with shame
That thou art unavenged! [*Exit* VITTORIA.

SCENE III.—*A Chapel, with a Monument on which is laid a sword.—Moonlight.*

PROCIDA, RAIMOND, MONTALBA.

Mon. And know you not my story?
Pro. In the lands
Where I have been a wanderer, your deep wrongs
Were number'd with our country's; but their tale
Came only in faint echoes to mine ear.
I would fain hear it now.
Mon. Hark! while you spoke,
There was a voice-like murmur in the breeze,
Which even like death came o'er me. 'Twas a night
Like this, of clouds contending with the moon,
A night of sweeping winds, of rustling leaves,
And swift wild shadows floating o'er the earth,
Clothed with a phantom life, when, after years
Of battle and captivity, I spurr'd
My good steed homewards. Oh! what lovely dreams

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Rose on my spirit! There were tears and smiles,
But all of joy! And there were bounding steps,
And clinging arms, whose passionate clasp of love
Doth twine so fondly round the warrior's neck
When his plumed helm is doff'd.—Hence, feeble thoughts!
—I am sterner now, yet once such dreams were mine!

Raim. And were they realised?

Mon. Youth! Ask me not,
But listen! I drew near my own fair home—
There was no light along its walls, no sound
Of bugle pealing from the watch-tower's height
At my approach, although my trampling steed
Made the earth ring, yet the wide gates were thrown
All open. Then my heart misgave me first,
And on the threshold of my silent hall
I paused a moment, and the wind swept by
With the same deep and dirge-like tone, which pierced
My soul e'en now! I call'd—my struggling voice
Gave utterance to my wife's, my children's names.
They answer'd not. I roused my failing strength,
And wildly rush'd within.—And they were there.

Raim. And was all well?

Mon. Ay, well!—for death is well:
And they were all at rest! I see them yet,
Pale in their innocent beauty, which had fail'd
To stay the assassin's arm!

Raim. Oh, righteous heaven!
Who had done this?

Mon. Who!

Pro. Canst thou question, *who?*

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Whom hath the earth to perpetrate such deeds,
In the cold-blooded revelry of crime,
But those whose yoke is on us?
Raim. Man of woe!
What words hath pity for despair like thine?
Mon. Pity!—fond youth!—My soul disdains the grief
Which doth unbosom its deep secrecies
To ask a vain companionship of tears,
And so to be relieved!
Pro. For woes like these
There is no sympathy but vengeance.
Mon. None!
Therefore I brought you hither, that your hearts
Might catch the spirit of the scene! Look round!
We are in th' awful presence of the dead;
Within yon tomb *they* sleep, whose gentle blood
Weighs down the murderer's soul. *They* sleep!—but I
Am wakeful o'er their dust! I laid my sword,
Without its sheath, on their sepulchral stone,
As on an altar; and the eternal stars,
And heaven, and night, bore witness to my vow,
No more to wield it, save in one great cause—
The vengeance of the grave! And now the hour
Of that atonement comes!
[*He takes the sword from the tomb.*
Raim. My spirit burns!
And my full heart almost to bursting swells.
—Oh, for the day of battle!
Pro. Raimond, they
Whose souls are dark with guiltless blood must die,

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—But not in battle.

Raim. How, my father ?

Pro. No !

Look on that sepulchre, and it will teach
Another lesson. But the appointed hour
Advances. Thou wilt join our chosen band,
Noble Montalba ?

Mon. Leave me for a time,
That I may calm my soul by intercourse
With the still dead, before I mix with men
And with their passions. I have nursed for years,
In silence and in solitude, the flame
Which doth consume me ; and it is not used
Thus to be look'd or breathed on. Procida !
I would be tranquil—or appear so—ere
I join your brave confederates. Through my heart
There struck a pang—but it will soon have pass'd.

Pro. Remember !—in the cavern by the cross.
Now follow me, my son.

[*Exeunt* PROCIDA *and* RAIMOND.

Mon. (*after a pause, leaning on the tomb.*) Said he,
"*My son ?*" Now, why should this man's life
Go down in hope, thus resting on a son,
And I be desolate ? How strange a sound
Was that—"*my son !*" I had a boy, who might
Have worn as free a soul upon his brow
As doth this youth. Why should the thought of *him*
Thus haunt me ? When I tread the peopled ways
Of life again, I shall be pass'd each hour
By fathers with their children, and I must
Learn calmly to look on. Methinks 'twere now

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A gloomy consolation to behold
All men bereft as I am ! But away,
Vain thoughts !—One task is left for blighted hearts,
And it shall be fulfill'd. [*Exit* MONTALBA.

SCENE IV. — *Entrance of a Cave, surrounded by Rocks and Forests. A rude Cross seen among the Rocks.*

PROCIDA, RAIMOND.

Pro. And is it thus, beneath the solemn skies
Of midnight, and in solitary caves,
Where the wild forest creatures make their lair—
Is 't thus the chiefs of Sicily must hold
The councils of their country ?
Raim. Why, such scenes
In their primeval majesty, beheld
Thus by faint starlight, and the partial glare
Of the red-streaming lava, will inspire
Far deeper thoughts than pillar'd halls, wherein
Statesmen hold weary vigils. Are we not
O'ershadowed by that Etna, which of old
With its dread prophecies hath struck dismay
Through tyrants' hearts, and bade them seek a home
In other climes ? Hark ! from its depths, e'en now,
What hollow moans are sent !

Enter MONTALBA, GUIDO, *and other* SICILIANS.

Pro. Welcome, my brave associates !—We can share

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The wolf's wild freedom here! Th' oppressor's haunt
Is not midst rocks and caves. Are we all met?
Sicilians. All, all!
Pro. The torchlight, sway'd by every gust,
But dimly shows your features.—Where is he
Who from his battles had return'd to breathe
Once more without a corslet, and to meet
The voices and the footsteps and the smiles
Blent with his dreams of home? Of that dark tale
The rest is known to vengeance! Art thou here,
With thy deep wrongs, and resolute despair,
Childless Montalba?
Mon. (*advancing.*) He is at thy side.
Call on that desolate father in the hour
When his revenge is nigh.
Pro. Thou, too, come forth,
From thine own halls an exile! Dost thou make
The mountain-fastnesses thy dwelling still,
While hostile banners o'er thy rampart walls
Wave their proud blazonry?
First Sicilian. Even so. I stood
Last night before my own ancestral towers
An unknown outcast, while the tempest beat
On my bare head. What reck'd it? There was joy
Within, and revelry; the festive lamps
Were streaming from each turret, and gay songs
I' th' stranger's tongue made mirth. They little deem'd
Who heard their melodies! But there are thoughts
Best nurtured in the wild; there are dread vows

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Known to the mountain echoes. Procida!
Call on the outcast, when revenge is nigh.

Pro. I knew a young Sicilian—one whose heart
Should be all fire. On that most guilty day
When, with our martyr'd Conradin, the flower
Of the land's knighthood perished; he of whom
I speak, a weeping boy, whose innocent tears
Melted a thousand hearts that dared not aid,
Stood by the scaffold with extended arms,
Calling upon his father, whose last look
Turn'd full on him its parting agony.
The father's blood gush'd o'er him! and the boy
Then dried his tears, and with a kindling eye,
And a proud flush on his young cheek, look'd up
To the bright heaven.—Doth he remember still
That bitter hour?

Second Sicilian. He bears a sheathless sword!
—Call on the orphan when revenge is nigh.

Pro. Our band shows gallantly—but there are men
Who should be with us now, had they not dared
In some wild moment of festivity
To give their full hearts way, and breathe a wish
For freedom!—and some traitor—it might be
A breeze perchance—bore the forbidden sound
To Eribert: so they must die—unless
Fate (who at times is wayward) should select
Some other victim first! But have they not
Brothers or sons among us?

Gui. Look on me!
I have a brother—a young high-soul'd boy,
And beautiful as a sculptor's dream, with brow

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That wears amidst its dark rich curls, the stamp
Of inborn nobleness. In truth, he is
A glorious creature! But his doom is seal'd
With theirs of whom ye spoke; and I have knelt—
Ay, scorn me not! 'twas for his life—I knelt
E'en at the viceroy's feet, and he put on
That heartless laugh of cold malignity
We know so well, and spurn'd me. But the stain
Of shame like this takes blood to wash it off,
And *thus* it shall be cancell'd! Call on me,
When the stern moment of revenge is nigh.

Pro. I call upon thee *now!* The land's high soul
Is roused, and moving onward, like a breeze
Or a swift sunbeam, kindling nature's hues
To deeper life before it. In his chains,
The peasant dreams of freedom!—Ay, 'tis thus
Oppression fans th' imperishable flame
With most unconscious hands. No praise be hers
For what she blindly works! When slavery's cup
O'erflows its bounds, the creeping poison, meant
To dull our senses, through each burning vein
Pours fever, lending a delirious strength
To burst man's fetters. And they *shall* be burst!
I have hoped, when hope seem'd frenzy; but a power
Abides in human will, when bent with strong
Unswerving energy on one great aim,
To make and rule its fortunes! I have been
A wanderer in the fulness of my years,
A restless pilgrim of the earth and seas,
Gathering the generous thoughts of other lands,
To aid our holy cause. And aid is near:

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But we must give the signal. Now, before
The majesty of yon pure heaven, whose eye
Is on our hearts—whose righteous arm befriends
The arm that strikes for freedom—speak ! decree
The fate of our oppressors.
Mon. Let them fall
When dreaming least of peril !—When the heart,
Basking in sunny pleasure, doth forget
That hate may smile, but sleeps not. Hide the sword
With a thick veil of myrtle ; and in halls
Of banqueting, where the full wine-cup shines
Red in the festal torchlight, meet we there,
And bid them welcome to the feast of death.
Pro. Thy voice is low and broken, and thy words
Scarce meet our ears.
Mon. Why, then, I thus repeat
Their import. Let th' avenging sword burst forth
In some free festal hour—and woe to him
Who first shall spare !
Raim. Must innocence and guilt
Perish alike ?
Mon. Who talks of innocence ?
When hath *their* hand been stay'd for innocence ?
Let them all perish !—Heaven will choose its own.
Why should *their* children live ? The earthquake whelms
Its undistinguish'd thousands, making graves
Of peopled cities in its path—and this
Is heaven's dread justice—ay, and it is well !
Why then should *we* be tender, when the skies

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Deal thus with man ? What if the infant bleed ?
Is there not power to hush the mother's pangs ?
What if the youthful bride perchance should fall
In her triumphant beauty ? Should we pause ?
As if death were not mercy to the pangs
Which make our lives the records of our woes ?
Let them all perish ! And if one be found
Amidst our band to stay th' avenging steel
For pity, or remorse, or boyish love,
Then be his doom as theirs ! [*A pause.*
Why gaze ye thus ?
Brethren, what means your silence !
Sicilians. Be it so !
If one among us stay th' avenging steel
For love or pity, be his doom as theirs !
Pledge we our faith to this !
Raim. (*rushing forward indignantly.*) Our faith to *this !*
No ! I but *dreamt* I heard it ! Can it be ?
My countrymen, my father !—Is it thus
That freedom should be won ? Awake !—awake
To loftier thoughts ! Lift up, exultingly,
On the crown'd heights and to the sweeping winds,
Your glorious banner ! Let your trumpet's blast
Make the tombs thrill with echoes ! Call aloud,
Proclaim from all your hills, the land shall bear
The stranger's yoke no longer ! What is he
Who carries on his practised lip a smile,
Beneath his vest a dagger, which but waits
Till the heart bounds with joy, to still its beatings ?
That which our nature's instinct doth recoil from,
And our blood curdle at—ay, yours and mine—

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A murderer! Heard ye? Shall that name with ours
Go down to after days? O friends! a cause
Like that for which we rise, hath made bright names
Of th' elder time as rallying-words to men—
Sounds full of might and immortality!
And shall not ours be such?

Mon. Fond dreamer, peace!
Fame! What is fame? Will our unconscious dust
Start into thrilling rapture from the grave,
At the vain breath of praise? I tell thee, youth,
Our souls are parch'd with agonising thirst,
Which must be quench'd though death were in the draught:
We must have vengeance, for our foes have left
No other joy unblighted.

Pro. O, my son!
The time is past for such high dreams as thine.
Thou know'st not whom we deal with: knightly faith
And chivalrous honour are but things whereon
They cast disdainful pity. We must meet
Falsehood with wiles, and insult with revenge.
And, for our names—whate'er the deeds by which
We burst our bondage—is it not enough
That in the chronicle of days to come,
We, through a bright "For Ever," shall be call'd
The men who saved their country?

Raim. Many a land
Hath bow'd beneath the yoke, and then arisen
As a strong lion rending silken bonds,

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And on the open field, before high heaven,
Won such majestic vengeance as hath made
Its name a power on earth. Ay, nations own
It is enough of glory to be call'd
The children of the mighty, who redeem'd
Their native soil—but not by means like these.

Mon. I have no children. Of Montalba's blood
Not one red drop doth circle through the veins
Of aught that breathes! Why, what have *I* to do
With far futurity? My spirit lives
But in the past. Away! when thou dost stand
On this fair earth as doth a blasted tree
Which the warm sun revives not, *then* return,
Strong in thy desolation: but till then,
Thou art not for our purpose; we have need
Of more unshrinking hearts.

Raim. Montalba! know
I shrink from crime alone. Oh! if my voice
Might yet have power among you, I would say,
Associates, leaders, *be* avenged! but yet
As knights, as warriors!

Mon. Peace! Have we not borne
Th' indelible taint of contumely and chains?
We *are not* knights and warriors. Our bright crests
Have been defiled and trampled to the earth.
Boy! we are slaves—and our revenge shall be
Deep as a slave's disgrace.

Raim. Why, then, farewell:
I leave you to your counsels. He that still
Would hold his lofty nature undebased,
And his name pure, were but a loiterer here.

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Pro. And is it thus indeed?—dost *thou* forsake
Our cause, my son!
Raim. O, father! what proud hopes
This hour hath blighted! Yet, whate'er betide,
It is a noble privilege to look up
Fearless in heaven's bright face—and this is mine,
And shall be still. [*Exit* RAIMOND.
Pro. He's gone!—Why, let it be!
I trust our Sicily hath many a son
Valiant as mine. Associates! 'tis decreed
Our foes shall perish. We have but to name
The hour, the scene, the signal.
Mon. It should be
In the full city, when some festival
Hath gather'd throngs, and lull'd infatuate hearts
To brief security. Hark! is there not
A sound of hurrying footsteps on the breeze?
We are betray'd.—Who art thou?

VITTORIA *enters.*

Pro. *One* alone
Should be thus daring. Lady, lift the veil
That shades thy noble brow.

[*She raises her veil, the Sicilians draw back with respect.*

Sicilians. Th' affianced bride
Of our lost king!
Pro. And more, Montalba; know
Within this form there dwells a soul as high
As warriors in their battles e'er have proved,
Or patriots on the scaffold.

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Vit. Valiant men!
I come to ask your aid. You see me, one
Whose widow'd youth hath all been consecrate
To a proud sorrow, and whose life is held
In token and memorial of the dead.
Say, is it meet that lingering thus on earth,
But to behold one great atonement made,
And keep one name from fading in men's hearts,
A tyrant's will should force me to profane
Heaven's altar with unhallow'd vows—and live
Stung by the keen unutterable scorn
Of my own bosom, live—another's bride?
Sicilians. Never! oh, never! Fear not, noble lady!
Worthy of Conradin!
Vit. Yet hear me still—
His bride, that Eribert's, who notes our tears
With his insulting eye of cold derision,
And, could he pierce the depths where feeling works,
Would number e'en our agonies as crimes.
—Say, is this meet?
Gui. We deem'd these nuptials, lady,
Thy willing choice; but 'tis a joy to find
Thou art noble still. Fear not; by all our wrongs,
This shall not be.
Pro. Vittoria, thou art come
To ask *our* aid—but we have need of thine.
Know, the completion of our high designs
Requires—a festival; and it must be
Thy bridal!
Vit. Procida!
Pro. Nay, start not thus.
'Tis no hard task to bind your raven hair

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With festal garlands, and to bid the song
Rise, and the wine-cup mantle. No—nor yet
To meet your suitor at the glittering shrine,
Where death, not love, awaits him!

Vit. Can my soul
Dissemble thus?

Pro. We have no other means
Of winning our great birth-right back from those
Who have usurp'd it, than so lulling them
Into vain confidence, that they may deem
All wrongs forgot; and this may be best done
By what I ask of thee.

Mon. Then we will mix
With the flush'd revellers, making their gay feast
The harvest of the grave.

Vit. A bridal day!
—Must it be so? Then, chiefs of Sicily,
I bid you to my nuptials! but be there
With your bright swords unsheathed, for thus alone
My guests should be adorn'd.

Pro. And let thy banquet
Be soon announced; for there are noble men
Sentenced to die, for whom we fain would purchase
Reprieve with other blood.

Vit. Be it then the day
Preceding that appointed for their doom.

Gui. My brother! thou shalt live! Oppression boasts
No gift of prophecy!—It but remains
To name our signal, chiefs!

Mon. The Vesper-bell!

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Pro. Even so—the Vesper-bell, whose deep-toned peal
Is heard o'er land and wave. Part of our band,
Wearing the guise of antic revelry,
Shall enter, as in some fantastic pageant,
The halls of Eribert ; and at the hour
Devoted to the sword's tremendous task,
I follow with the rest. The Vesper-bell !
That sound like wake th' avenger ; for 'tis come,
The time when power is in a voice, a breath,
To burst the spell which bound us. But the night
Is waning, with her stars, which, one by one
Warn us to part. Friends, to your homes !—your *homes ?*
That name is yet to win. Away ! prepare
For our next meeting in Palermo's walls.
The Vesper-bell ! Remember !
Sicilians. Fear us not.
The Vesper-bell ! [*Exeunt omnes.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Apartment in a Palace.*

ERIBERT, VITTORIA.

Vit. Speak not of love—it is a word with deep
Strange magic in its melancholy sound,
To summon up the dead ; and they should rest,
At such an hour, forgotten. There are things
We must throw from us, when the heart would gather

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Strength to fulfil its settled purposes;
Therefore, no more of love! But if to robe
This form in bridal ornaments—to smile
(I *can* smile yet) at thy gay feast, and stand
At th' altar by thy side;—if this be deem'd
Enough, it shall be done.

Eri. My fortune's star
Doth rule th' ascendant still! (*Apart.*)—If not of love,
Then pardon, lady, that I speak of *joy*,
And with exulting heart——

Vit. There *is* no joy!
—Who shall look through the far futurity,
And, as the shadowy visions of events
Develop on his gaze, midst their dim throng,
Dare, with oracular mien, to point, and say,
"This will bring happiness?" Who shall do this?
—Who, thou and I, and all! There's One, who sits
In His own bright tranquillity enthroned,
High o'er all storms, and looking far beyond
Their thickest clouds! but we, from whose dull eyes
A grain of dust hides the great sun—e'en *we*
Usurp his attributes, and talk, as seers,
Of future joy and grief!

Eri. Thy words are strange.
Yet will I hope that peace at length shall settle
Upon thy troubled heart, and add soft grace
To thy majestic beauty. Fair Vittoria!
Oh! if my cares——

Vit. I know a day shall come
Of peace to all. Ev'n from my darken'd spirit

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Soon shall each restless wish be exorcised,
Which haunts it now, and I shall then lie down
Serenely to repose. Of this no more.
I have a boon to ask.
Eri. Command my power,
And deem it thus most honour'd.
Vit. Have I then
Soar'd such an eagle pitch, as to command
The mighty Eribert?—And yet 'tis meet;
For I bethink me now, I should have worn
A *crown* upon this forehead. Generous lord!
Since thus you give me freedom, know, there is
An hour I have loved from childhood, and a sound
Whose tones, o'er earth and ocean sweetly bearing
A sense of deep repose, have lull'd me oft
To peace—which is forgetfulness; I mean
The Vesper-bell. I pray you let it be
The summons to our bridal. Hear you not?
To our fair bridal!
Eri. Lady, let your will
Appoint each circumstance. I am too bless'd,
Proving my homage thus.
Vit. Why, then, 'tis mine
To rule the glorious fortunes of the day,
And I may be content. Yet much remains
For thought to brood on, and I would be left
Alone with my resolves. Kind Eribert!
(Whom I command so absolutely,) now
Part we a few brief hours; and doubt not, when
I'm at thy side once more, but I shall stand
There—to the last!
Eri. Your smiles are troubled, lady—

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May they ere long be brighter! Time will seem
Slow till the Vesper-bell.
Vit. 'Tis lovers' phrase
To say—Time lags; and therefore meet for you;
But with an equal pace the hours move on,
Whether they bear, on their swift silent wing,
Pleasure or—fate.
Eri. Be not so full of thought
On such a day. Behold, the skies themselves
Look on my joy with a triumphant smile
Unshadow'd by a cloud.
Vit. 'Tis very meet
That heaven (which loves the just) should wear a smile
In honour of his fortunes. Now, my lord,
Forgive me if I say farewell until
Th' appointed hour.
Eri. Lady, a brief farewell.
[*Exeunt separately.*

SCENE II.—*The Sea-shore.*

PROCIDA, RAIMOND.

Pro. And dost thou still refuse to share the glory
Of this, our daring enterprise?
Raim. Oh, father!
I, too, have dreamt of glory, and the word
Hath to my soul been as a trumpet's voice,
Making my nature sleepless. But the deeds
Whereby 'twas won—the high exploits, whose tale
Bids the heart burn, were of another cast
Than such as thou requirest.

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Pro. Every deed
Hath sanctity, if bearing for its aim
The freedom of our country; and the sword
Alike is honour'd in the patriot's hand,
Searching, midst warrior hosts, the heart which gave
Oppression birth, or flashing through the gloom
Of the still chamber, o'er its troubled couch,
At dead of night.

Raim. (*turning away.*) There is no path but one
For noble natures.

Pro. Wouldst thou ask the man
Who to the earth hath dash'd a nation's chains,
Rent as with heaven's own lightning, by what *means*
The glorious end was won? Go, swell th' acclaim!
Bid the deliverer, hail! and if his path
To that most bright and sovereign destiny,
Hath led o'er trampled thousands, be it call'd
A stern necessity, but not a crime!

Raim. Father! my soul yet kindles at the thought
Of nobler lessons, in my boyhood learn'd,
Ev'n from thy voice. The high remembrances
Of other days are stirring in the heart
Where *thou* didst plant them; and they speak of men
Who needed no vain sophistry to gild
Acts that would bear heaven's light—and such be mine!
O father! is it yet too late to draw
The praise and blessing of all valiant hearts
On our most righteous cause?

Pro. What wouldst thou do?

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Raim. I would go forth, and rouse th' indignant land
To generous combat. Why should freedom strike
Mantled with darkness? Is there not more strength
Ev'n in the waving of her single arm
Than hosts can wield against her? *I* would rouse
That spirit whose fire doth press resistless on
To its proud sphere—the stormy field of fight!

Pro. Ay! and give time and warning to the foe
To gather all his might! It *is* too late.
There is a work to be this eve begun,
When rings the Vesper-bell; and, long before
To-morrow's sun hath reach'd i' th' noonday heaven,
His throne of burning glory, every sound
Of the Provençal tongue within our walls,
As by one thunderstroke—(you are pale, my son)—
Shall be for ever silenced!

Raim. What! such sounds
As falter on the lip of infancy,
In its imperfect utterance? or are breathed
By the fond mother, as she lulls her babe?
Or in sweet hymns, upon the twilight air
Pour'd by the timid maid? Must all alike
Be still'd in death? and wouldst thou tell my heart
There is no crime in *this?*

Pro. Since thou dost feel
Such horror of our purpose, in thy power
Are means that might avert it.

Raim. Speak! oh speak!

Pro. How would those rescued thousands bless thy name
Shouldst thou betray us!

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Raim. Father! I can bear—
Ay, proudly woo—the keenest questioning
Of thy soul-gifted eye, which almost seems
To claim a part of heaven's dread royalty,
—The power that searches thought.
Pro. (*after a pause.*) Thou hast a brow
Clear as the day—and yet I doubt thee, Raimond!
Whether it be that I have learn'd distrust
From a long look through man's deep-folded heart;
Whether my paths have been so seldom cross'd
By honour and fair mercy, that they seem
But beautiful deceptions, meeting thus
My unaccustom'd gaze: howe'er it be—
I doubt thee! See thou waver not—take heed.
Time lifts the veil from all things! [*Exit* PROCIDA.
Raim. And 'tis thus
Youth fades from off our spirit; and the robes
Of beauty and of majesty, wherewith
We clothed our idols, drop! Oh, bitter day!
When, at the crushing of our glorious world,
We start, and find men thus! Yet be it so!
Is not my soul still powerful in *itself*
To realise its dreams? Ay, shrinking not
From the pure eye of heaven, my brow may well
Undaunted meet my father's. But, away!
Thou shalt be saved, sweet Constance!—Love is yet
Mightier than vengeance. [*Exit* RAIMOND.

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SCENE III.—*Gardens of a Palace.*

CONSTANCE, *alone.*

Con. There was a time when my thoughts wander'd not
Beyond these fairy scenes!—when but to catch
The languid fragrance of the southern breeze
From the rich flowering citrons, or to rest,
Dreaming of some wild legend, in the shade
Of the dark laurel foliage, was enough
Of happiness. How have these calm delights
Fled from before one passion, as the dews,
The delicate gems of morning, are exhaled
By the great sun! [RAIMOND *enters.*
Raimond! oh! now thou'rt come—
I read it in thy look—to say farewell
For the last time—the last!
Raim. No, best beloved!
I come to tell thee there is now no power
To part us but in death.
Con. I have dreamt of joy,
But never aught like this.—Speak yet again!
Say we shall part no more!
Raim. No more, if love
Can strive with darker spirits, and he is strong
In his immortal nature! all is changed
Since last we met. My father—keep the tale
Secret from all, and most of all, my Constance,
From Eribert—my father is return'd:
I leave thee not.

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Con. Thy father! blessèd sound!
Good angels be his guard! Oh! if he knew
How my soul clings to thine, he could not hate
Even a Provençal maid! Thy father!—now
Thy soul will be at peace, and I shall see
The sunny happiness of earlier days
Look from thy brow once more! But how is this?
Thine eye reflects not the glad soul of mine;
And in thy look is that which ill befits
A tale of joy.

Raim. A dream is on my soul.
I see a slumberer, crown'd with flowers, and smiling
As in delighted visions, on the brink
Of a dread chasm; and this strange fantasy
Hath cast so deep a shadow o'er my thoughts,
I cannot but be sad.

Con. Why, let me sing
One of the sweet wild strains you love so well,
And this will banish it.

Raim. It may not be.
O gentle Constance! go not forth to-day:
Such dreams are ominous.

Con. Have you then forgot
My brother's nuptial feast? I must be one
Of the gay train attending to the shrine
His stately bride. In sooth, my step of joy
Will print earth lightly now.—What fear'st thou, love?
Look all around! the blue transparent skies,
And sunbeams pouring a more buoyant life
Through each glad thrilling vein, will brightly chase

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All thought of evil. Why, the very air
Breathes of delight! Through all its glowing realms
Doth music blend with fragrance; and e'en here
The city's voice of jubilee is heard,
Till each light leaf seems trembling unto sounds
Of human joy!

Raim. There lie far deeper things—
Things that may darken thought for life, beneath
That city's festive semblance. I have pass'd
Through the glad multitudes, and I have mark'd
A stern intelligence in meeting eyes,
Which deem'd their flash unnoticed, and a quick,
Suspicious vigilance, too intent to clothe
Its mien with carelessness; and now and then,
A hurrying start, a whisper, or a hand
Pointing by stealth to some one, singled out
Amidst the reckless throng. O'er all is spread
A mantling flush of revelry, which may hide
Much from unpractised eyes; but lighter signs
Have been prophetic oft.

Con. I tremble!—Raimond!
What may these things portend?

Raim. It was a day
Of festival like this; the city sent
Up through her sunny firmament a voice
Joyous as now; when, scarcely heralded
By one deep moan, forth from his cavernous depths
The earthquake burst; and the wide splendid scene
Became one chaos of all fearful things,
Till the brain whirl'd, partaking the sick motion
Of rocking palaces.

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Con. And then didst thou,
My noble Raimond! through the dreadful paths
Laid open by destruction, past the chasms,
Whose fathomless clefts, a moment's work, had given
One burial unto thousands, rush to save
Thy trembling Constance! she who lives to bless
Thy generous love, that still the breath of heaven
Wafts gladness to her soul!

Raim. Heaven!—heaven is just!
And being so, must guard thee, sweet one, still.
Trust none beside. Oh! the omnipotent skies
Make their wrath manifest, but insidious *man*
Doth compass those he hates with secret snares,
Wherein lies fate. Know, danger walks abroad,
Mask'd as a reveller. Constance! oh! by all
Our tried affection, all the vows which bind
Our hearts together, meet me in these bowers,
Here, I adjure thee, meet me, when the bell
Doth sound for vesper prayer!

Con. And know'st thou not
'Twill be the bridal hour?

Raim. It will not, love!
That hour will bring no bridal! Naught of this
To human ear; but speed thou hither—fly,
When evening brings that signal. Dost thou heed?
This is no meeting by a lover sought
To breathe fond tales, and make the twilight groves
And stars attest his vows; deem thou not so,
Therefore denying it! I tell thee, Constance!
If thou wouldst save me from such fierce despair
As falls on man, beholding all he loves
Perish before him, while his strength can but

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Strive with his agony—thou'lt meet me then.
Look on me, love!—I am not oft so moved—
Thou'lt meet me?

Con. Oh! what mean thy words? If then
My steps are free,—I will. Be thou but calm.

Raim. Be calm!—there is a cold and sullen calm,
And, were my wild fears made realities,
It might be mine; but, in this dread suspense—
This conflict of all terrible fantasies,
There is no calm. Yet fear thou not, dear love!
I will watch o'er thee still. And now, farewell
Until that hour!

Con. My Raimond, fare thee well. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Room in the Citadel of Palermo.*

ALBERTI, DE COUCI.

De Cou. Said'st thou this night?

Alb. This very night—and lo!
E'en now the sun declines.

De Cou. What! are they arm'd?

Alb. All arm'd, and strong in vengeance and despair.

De Cou. Doubtful and strange the tale! Why was not this reveal'd before?

Alb. Mistrust me not, my lord!
That stern and jealous Procida hath kept
O'er all my steps (as though he did suspect
The purposes, which oft his eye hath sought
To read in mine) a watch so vigilant,
I knew not how to warn thee, though for this

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Alone I mingled with his bands—to learn
Their projects and their strength. Thou know'st my faith
To Anjou's house full well.

De Cou. How may we now
Avert the gathering storm? The viceroy holds
His bridal feast, and all is revelry.
'Twas a true-boding heaviness of heart
Which kept me from these nuptials.

Alb. Thou thyself
May'st yet escape, and haply of thy bands
Rescue a part, ere long to wreak full vengeance
Upon these rebels. 'Tis too late to dream
Of saving Eribert. E'en shouldst thou rush
Before him with the tidings, in his pride
And confidence of soul, he would but laugh
Thy tale to scorn.

De Cou. He must not die unwarn'd,
Though it be all in vain. But thou, Alberti,
Rejoin thy comrades, lest thine absence wake
Suspicion in their hearts. Thou hast done well,
And shalt not pass unguerdon'd, should I live
Through the deep horrors of th' approaching night.

Alb. Noble De Couci, trust me still. Anjou
Commands no heart more faithful than Alberti's.

[*Exit* ALBERTI.

De Cou. The grovelling slave!—And yet he spoke too true!
For Eribert, in blind elated joy,
Will scorn the warning voice. The day wanes fast,
And through the city, recklessly dispersed,

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Unarm'd and unprepared, my soldiers revel,
E'en on the brink of fate. I must away.
[*Exit* De Couci.

Scene V.—*A Banqueting Hall. Provençal Nobles assembled.*

1*st Noble.* Joy be to this fair meeting! Who hath seen
The viceroy's bride?
2*d Noble.* I saw her as she pass'd
The gazing throngs assembled in the city.
'Tis said she hath not left for years, till now,
Her castle's wood-girt solitude. 'Twill gall
These proud Sicilians that her wide domains
Should be the conqueror's guerdon.
3*d Noble.* 'Twas their boast
With what fond faith she worshipp'd still the name
Of the boy Conradin. How will the slaves
Brook this new triumph of their lords?
2*d Noble.* In sooth,
It stings them to the quick. In the full streets
They mix with our Provençals, and assume
A guise of mirth, but it sits hardly on them.
'Twere worth a thousand festivals to see
With what a bitter and unnatural effort
They strive to smile!
1*st Noble.* Is this Vittoria fair?
2*d Noble.* Of a most noble mien; but yet her beauty
Is wild and awful, and her large dark eye,

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In its unsettled glances, hath strange power,
From which thou'lt shrink as I did.
1st Noble. Hush! they come.

Enter ERIBERT, VITTORIA, CONSTANCE, *and others.*

Eri. Welcome, my noble friends!—there must not lower
One clouded brow to-day in Sicily!
—Behold my bride!
Nobles. Receive our homage, lady!
Vit. I bid all welcome. May the feast we offer
Prove worthy of such guests!
Eri. Look on her, friends!
And say if that majestic brow is not
Meet for a diadem?
Vit. 'Tis well, my lord!
When memory's pictures fade—'tis kindly done
To brighten their dimm'd hues!
1st Noble (*apart.*) Mark'd you her glance?
2d Noble (*apart.*) What eloquent scorn was there? Yet he, th' elate
Of heart, perceives it not.
Eri. Now to the feast!
Constance, you look not joyous. I have said
That all should smile to-day.
Con. Forgive me, brother;
The heart is wayward, and its garb of pomp
At times oppresses it.
Eri. Why, how is this?
Con. Voices of woe, and prayers of agony,
Unto my soul have risen, and left sad sounds
There echoing still. Yet would I fain be gay,

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Since 'tis your wish. In truth, I should have been
A village maid.
Eri. But being as you are,
Not thus ignobly free, command your looks
(They may be taught obedience) to reflect
The aspect of the time.
Vit. And know, fair maid!
That, if in this unskill'd, you stand alone
Amidst our court of pleasure.
Eri. To the feast!
Now let the red wine foam!—There should be mirth
When conquerors revel! Lords of this fair isle!
Your good swords' heritage, crown each bowl, and pledge
The present and the future! for they both
Look brightly on us. Dost thou smile, my bride?
Vit. Yes, Eribert!—thy prophecies of joy
Have taught e'en *me* to smile.
Eri. 'Tis well. To-day
I have won a fair and almost *royal* bride;
To-morrow let the bright sun speed his course,
To waft me happiness!—my proudest foes
Must die; and then my slumber shall be laid
On rose-leaves, with no envious fold to mar
The luxury of its visions!—Fair Vittoria,
Your looks are troubled!
Vit. It is strange—but oft,
Midst festal songs and garlands, o'er my soul
Death comes, with some dull image! as you spoke
Of those whose blood is claim'd, I thought for them
Who, in a darkness thicker than the night
E'er wove with all her clouds, have pined so long,

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How blessèd were the stroke which makes them things
Of that invisible world, wherein, we trust,
There is at least no bondage! But should *we*
From such a scene as this, where all earth's joys
Contend for mastery, and the very sense
Of life is rapture—should *we* pass, I say,
At once from such excitements to the void
And silent gloom of that which doth await us—
Were it not dreadful?

Eri. Banish such dark thoughts!
They ill beseem the hour.

Vit. There is no hour
Of this mysterious world, in joy or woe,
But they beseem it well! Why, what a slight,
Impalpable bound is that, th' unseen, which severs
Being from death! And who can tell how near
Its misty brink he stands?

1*st Noble* (*aside.*) What mean her words?

2*d Noble.* There's some dark mystery here.

Eri. No more of this!
Pour the bright juice, which Etna's glowing vines
Yield to the conquerors! And let music's voice
Dispel these ominous dreams!—Wake, harp and song!
Swell out your triumph!

A Messenger enters bearing a letter.

Mes. Pardon, my good lord!
But this demands——

Eri. What means thy breathless haste,

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And that ill-boding mien? Away! such looks
Befit not hours like these.

Mes. The Lord De Couci
Bade me bear this, and say, 'tis fraught with tidings
Of life and death.

Vit. (*hurriedly.*) Is this a time for aught
But revelry? My lord, these dull intrusions
Mar the bright spirit of the festal scene!

Eri. (*to the Messenger.*) Hence! tell the Lord
De Couci, we will talk
Of life and death to-morrow. [*Exit messenger.*
Let there be
Around me none but joyous looks to-day,
And strains whose very echoes wake to mirth!

(*A band of the conspirators enter, to the sound of music, disguised as shepherds, bacchanals, &c.*)

Eri. What forms are these? What means this
antic triumph?

Vit. 'Tis but a rustic pageant, by my vassals
Prepared to grace our bridal. Will you not
Hear their wild music? Our Sicilian vales
Have many a sweet and mirthful melody,
To which the glad heart bounds. Breathe ye some
strain
Meet for the time, ye sons of Sicily!

(*One of the Masquers sings.*)

The festal eve, o'er earth and sky,
In her sunset robe looks bright,
And the purple hills of Sicily
With their vineyards laugh in light;

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From the marble cities of her plains,
Glad voices mingling swell;
—But with yet more loud and lofty strains,
They shall hail the Vesper-bell!

Oh! sweet its tones, when the summer breeze
Their cadence wafts afar,
To float o'er the blue Sicilian seas,
As they gleam to the first pale star!
The shepherd greets them on his height,.
The hermit in his cell;
—But a deeper voice shall breathe to-night,
In the sound of the Vesper-bell!

[*The bell rings.*

Eri. It is the hour! Hark, hark!—my bride, our summons!
The altar is prepared and crown'd with flowers,
That wait——

Vit. The victim!

[*A tumult heard without.*

PROCIDA *and* MONTALBA *enter, with others, armed.*

Pro. Strike! the hour is come!

Vit. Welcome, avengers, welcome! Now, be strong!

[*The conspirators throw off their disguise, and rush with their swords drawn upon the Provençals.* ERIBERT *is wounded, and falls.*

Pro. Now hath fate reach'd thee in thy mid career,
Thou reveller in a nation's agonies!

[*The Provençals are driven off, pursued by the Sicilians.*

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Con. (*supporting* ERIBERT.) My brother! oh, my brother!

Eri. Have I stood
A leader in the battle-fields of kings,
To perish thus at last? Ay, by these pangs,
And this strange chill, that heavily doth creep,
Like a slow poison, through my curdling veins,
This should be—death! In sooth, a dull exchange
For the gay bridal feast!

Voices (*without.*) Remember Conradin!—spare none!—spare none!

Vit. (*throwing off her bridal wreath and ornaments.*) This is proud freedom! Now my soul may cast,
In generous scorn, her mantle of dissembling
To earth for ever! And it is such joy,
As if a captive from his dull cold cell
Might soar at once, on charter'd wing, to range
The realms of starr'd infinity! Away!
Vain mockery of a bridal wreath! The hour
For which stern patience ne'er kept watch in vain
Is come; and I may give my bursting heart
Full and indignant scope. Now, Eribert!
Believe in retribution! What! proud man!
Prince, ruler, conqueror! didst thou deem Heaven slept?
"Or that the unseen, immortal ministers,
Ranging the world to note e'en purposed crime
In burning characters, had laid aside
Their everlasting attributes for *thee?*"
O blind security! He, in whose dread hand
The lightnings vibrate, holds them back, until

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The trampler of this goodly earth hath reach'd
His pyramid-height of power ; that so his fall
May with more fearful oracles make pale
Man's crown'd oppressors !

Con. Oh ! reproach him not !
His soul is trembling on the dizzy brink
Of that dim world where passion may not enter.
Leave him in peace.

Voices (*without.*) Anjou ! Anjou !—De Couci, to the rescue !

Eri. (*half raising himself.*) My brave Provençals ! do ye combat still ?
And I your chief am here ! Now, now I feel
That death indeed is bitter !

Vit. Fare thee well !
Thine eyes so oft with their insulting smile
Have look'd on man's last pangs, thou shouldst by this
Be perfect how to die ! [*Exit* VITTORIA.

RAIMOND *enters.*

Raim. Away, my Constance !
Now is the time for flight. Our slaughtering bands
Are scatter'd far and wide. A little while
And thou shalt be in safety. Know'st thou not
That low sweet vale, where dwells the holy man,
Anselmo ?—He whose hermitage is rear'd
Mid some old temple's ruins ? Round the spot
His name hath spread so pure and deep a charm,
'Tis hallow'd as a sanctuary wherein
Thou shalt securely bide, till this wild storm
Have spent its fury. Haste !

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Con. I will not fly!
While in his heart there is one throb of life,
One spark in his dim eyes, I will not leave
The brother of my youth to perish thus,
Without one kindly bosom to sustain
His dying head.

Eri. The clouds are darkening round.
There are strange voices ringing in mine ear
That summon me—to what? But I have been
Used to command!—Away! I will not die
But on the field—— [*He dies.*

Con. (*kneeling by him.*) O Heaven! be merciful
As thou art just!—for he is now where nought
But mercy can avail him.—It is past!

GUIDO *enters with his sword drawn.*

Gui. (*to* RAIMOND.) I've sought thee long—why art thou lingering here?
Haste, follow me! Suspicion with thy name
Joins that word—*Traitor!*

Raim. Traitor!—Guido?

Gui. Yes!
Hast thou not heard, that, with his men-at-arms,
After vain conflict with a people's wrath,
De Couci hath escaped? And there are those
Who murmur that from *thee* the warning came
Which saved him from our vengeance. But e'en yet,
In the red current of Provençal blood,
That doubt may be effaced. Draw thy good sword,
And follow me!

Raim. And *thou* couldst doubt me, Guido!

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'Tis come to this!—Away! mistrust me still.
I will not stain my sword with deeds like thine.
Thou know'st me not!

Gui. Raimond di Procida!—
If thou art he whom once I deem'd so noble—
Call me thy friend no more! *Exit* GUIDO.

Raim. (*after a pause.*) Rise, dearest, rise!
Thy duty's task hath nobly been fulfill'd,
E'en in the face of death; but all is o'er,
And this is now no place where nature's tears
In quiet sanctity may freely flow.
—Hark! the wild sounds that wait on fearful deeds
Are swelling on the winds, as the deep roar
Of fast-advancing billows; and for *thee*
I shame not thus to tremble.—Speed! oh, speed!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Palermo.*

PROCIDA *enters.*

Pro. How strange and deep a stillness loads the air,
As with the power of midnight! Ay, where death
Hath pass'd, there should be silence. But this hush
Of nature's heart, this breathlessness of all things,
Doth press on thought too heavily, and the sky,
With its dark robe of purple thunder-clouds,
Brooding in sullen masses o'er my spirit,
Weighs like an omen! Wherefore should this be?
Is not our task achieved—the mighty work

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Of our deliverance? Yes; I should be joyous:
But this our feeble nature, with its quick
Instinctive superstitions, will drag down
Th' ascending soul. And I have fearful bodings
That treachery lurks amongst us.—Raimond! Raimond!
Oh, guilt ne'er made a mien like his its garb!
It cannot be!

MONTALBA, GUIDO, *and other Sicilians enter.*

Pro. Welcome! we meet in joy!
Now may we bear ourselves erect, resuming
The kingly port of freemen! Who shall dare,
After this proof of slavery's dread recoil,
To weave us chains again?—Ye have done well.

Mon. We *have* done well. There needs no choral song,
No shouting multitudes, to blazon forth
Our stern exploits. The *silence* of our foes
Doth vouch enough, and they are laid to rest,
Deep as the sword could make it. Yet our task
Is still but half achieved, since with his bands
De Couci hath escaped, and doubtless leads
Their footsteps to Messina, where our foes
Will gather all their strength. Determined hearts
And deeds to startle earth, are yet required
To make the mighty sacrifice complete.—
Where is thy son?

Pro. I know not. Once last night
He cross'd my path, and with one stroke beat down
A sword just raised to smite me, and restored
My own, which in that deadly strife had been

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Wrench'd from my grasp; but when I would have
press'd him
To my exulting bosom, he drew back,
And with a sad, and yet a scornful smile,
Full of strange meaning, left me. Since that hour
I have not seen him. Wherefore didst thou ask?

Mon. It matters not. We have deep things to
speak of.
Know'st thou that we have traitors in our councils?

Pro. I know some voice in secret must have warn'd
De Couci, or his scatter'd bands had ne'er
So soon been marshall'd, and in close array
Led hence as from the field. Hast thou heard aught
That may develop this?

Mon. The guards we set
To watch the city gates, have seized, this morn,
One whose quick fearful glance, and hurried step,
Betray'd his guilty purpose. Mark! he bore
(Amidst the tumult, deeming that his flight
Might all unnoticed pass) these scrolls to him—
The fugitive Provençal. Read and judge!

Pro. Where is this messenger?

Mon. Where *should* he be?—
They slew him in their wrath.

Pro. Unwisely done!
Give me the scrolls. [*He reads.*
Now, if there be such things
As may to death add sharpness, yet delay
The pang which gives release; if there be power
In execration, to call down the fires
Of yon avenging heaven, whose rapid shafts
But for such guilt were aimless; be they heap'd

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Upon the traitor's head! Scorn make his name
Her mark for ever!
Mon. In our passionate blindness,
We send forth curses, whose deep stings recoil
Oft on ourselves.
Pro. Whate'er fate hath of ruin
Fall on his house! What! to resign again
That freedom for whose sake our souls have now
Engrain'd themselves in blood! Why, who is he
That hath devised this treachery? To the scroll
Why fix'd he not his name, so stamping it
With an immortal infamy, whose brand
Might warn men from him? Who should be so vile?
Alberti?—In his eye is that which ever
Shrinks from encountering mine!—But no! his race
Is of our noblest. Oh! he could not shame
That high descent! Urbino?—Conti?—No!
They are too deeply pledged. There's one name more!
—I cannot utter it! Now shall I read
Each face with cold suspicion, which doth blot
From man's high mien its native royalty,
And seal his noble forehead with the impress
Of its own vile imaginings! Speak your thoughts,
Montalba! Guido!—Who should this man be?
Mon. Why, what Sicilian youth unsheathed last night
His sword to aid our foes, and turn'd its edge
Against his country's chiefs?—He that did *this*,
May well be deem'd for guiltier treason ripe.
Pro. And who is he?
Mon. Nay, ask thy son.

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Pro. My son!
What should *he* know of such a recreant heart?
Speak, Guido! thou'rt his friend!
Gui. I would not wear
The brand of such a name!
Pro. How? what means this?
A flash of light breaks in upon my soul!
Is it to blast me? Yet the fearful doubt
Hath crept in darkness through my thoughts before,
And been flung from them. Silence!—Speak not yet!
I would be calm and meet the thunder-burst
With a strong heart. [*A pause.*
Now, what have I to hear?
Your tidings?
Gui. Briefly, 'twas your son did thus!
He hath disgraced your name.
Pro. My son did thus!
Are thy words oracles, that I should search
Their hidden meaning out? *What* did my son?
I have forgot the tale. Repeat it, quick!
Gui. 'Twill burst upon thee all too soon. While we
Were busy at the dark and solemn rites
Of retribution; while we bathed the earth
In red libations, which will consecrate
The soil they mingled with to freedom's step
Through the long march of ages: 'twas his task
To shield from danger a Provençal maid,
Sister of him whose cold oppression stung
Our hearts to madness.
Mon. What! should she be spared

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To keep that name from perishing on earth?
—I cross'd them in their path, and raised my sword
To smite her in her champion's arms. We fought.
The boy disarm'd me! And I live to tell
My shame, and wreak my vengeance!

Gui. Who but he
Could warn De Couci, or devise the guilt
These scrolls reveal? Hath not the traitor still
Sought, with his fair and specious eloquence,
To win us from our purpose? All things seem
Leagued to unmask him.

Mon. Know you not there came,
E'en in the banquet's hour, from this De Couci,
One, bearing unto Eribert the tidings
Of all our purposed deeds? And have we not
Proof, as the noon-day clear, that Raimond loves
The sister of that tyrant?

Pro. There was one
Who mourn'd for being childless! Let him now
Feast o'er his children's graves, and I will join
The revelry!

Mon. (*apart.*) You shall be childless too!

Pro. Was't you, Montalba!—Now rejoice, I say!
There is no name so near you, that its stains
Should call the fever'd and indignant blood
To your dark cheek! But I will dash to earth
The weight that presses on my heart, and then
Be glad as thou art.

Mon. What means this, my lord?
Who hath seen gladness on Montalba's mien?

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Pro. Why, should not all be glad who have no *sons*
To tarnish their bright name ?
Mon. I am not used
To bear with mockery.
Pro. Friend ! by yon high Heaven,
I mock thee not ! 'Tis a proud fate to live
Alone and unallied. Why, what's alone ?
A word whose sense is—*free !*—Ay, free from all
The venom'd stings implanted in the heart
By those it loves. Oh ! I could laugh to think
O' th' joy that riots in baronial halls,
When the word comes—" A son is born !"—A *son !*
They should say thus—" He that shall knit your brow
To furrows, not of years—and bid your eye
Quail its proud glance to tell the earth its shame,
Is born, and so rejoice ! " *Then* might we feast,
And know the cause ! Were it not excellent ?
Mon. This is all idle. There are deeds to do :
Arouse thee, Procida !
Pro. Why, am I not
Calm as immortal justice ! She can strike,
And yet be passionless—and thus will I.
I know thy meaning. Deeds to do !—'tis well.
They shall be done ere thought on. Go ye forth :
There is a youth who calls himself my son.
His name is Raimond—in his eye is light
That shows like truth—but be not ye deceived !
Bear him in chains before us. We will sit
To-day in judgment, and the skies shall see
The strength which girds our nature. Will not this

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Be glorious, brave Montalba? Linger not,
Ye tardy messengers! for there are things
Which ask the speed of storms.
[*Exeunt* GUIDO *and others.*
Is not this well?

Mon. 'Tis noble. Keep thy spirit to this proud height—
(*Aside.*) And then be desolate like me! My woes
Will at the thought grow light.

Pro. What now remains
To be prepared? There should be solemn pomp
To grace a day like this. Ay, breaking hearts
Require a drapery to conceal their throbs
From cold inquiring eyes; and it must be
Ample and rich, that so their gaze may not
Explore what lies beneath. [*Exit* PROCIDA.

Mon. Now this is well!
—I hate this Procida; for he hath won
In all our councils that ascendancy
And mastery o'er bold hearts, which should have been
Mine by a thousand claims. Had *he* the strength
Of wrongs like mine? No! for that name—his country—
He strikes; *my* vengeance hath a deeper fount:
But there's dark joy in this!—And fate hath barr'd
My soul from every other. [*Exit* MONTALBA.

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SCENE II.—*A Hermitage surrounded by the Ruins of an Ancient Temple.*

CONSTANCE, ANSELMO.

Con. 'Tis strange he comes not! Is not this the still
And sultry hour of noon? He should have been
Here by the daybreak. Was there not a voice?
—"No! 'tis the shrill cicada, with glad life
Peopling these marble ruins, as it sports
Amidst them in the sun." Hark! yet again!
No! no! forgive me, father! that I bring
Earth's restless griefs and passions, to disturb
The stillness of thy holy solitude:
My heart is full of care.

Ans. There is no place
So hallow'd as to be unvisited
By mortal cares. Nay, whither should we go
With our deep griefs and passions, but to scenes
Lonely and still, where He that made our hearts
Will speak to them in whispers? I have known
Affliction too, my daughter.

Con. Hark! his step!
I know it well—he comes—my Raimond, welcome!

VITTORIA *enters,* CONSTANCE *shrinks back on perceiving her.*

Oh, Heaven! that aspect tells a fearful tale.

Vit. (*not observing her.*) There is a cloud of horror on my soul;
And on thy words, Anselmo, peace doth wait,

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Even as an echo, following the sweet close
Of some divine and solemn harmony :
Therefore I sought thee now. Oh ! speak to me
Of holy things and names, in whose deep sound
Is power to bid the tempests of the heart
Sink, like a storm rebuked.

Ans. What recent grief
Darkens thy spirit thus ?

Vit. I said not grief.
We should rejoice to-day, but joy is not
That which it hath been. In the flowers which wreathe
Its mantling cup, there is a scent unknown,
Fraught with a strange delirium. All things now
Have changed their nature : still, I say, rejoice!
There is a cause, Anselmo! We are free—
Free and avenged ! Yet on my soul there hangs
A darkness, heavy as the oppressive gloom
Of midnight fantasies. Ay, for this, too,
There is a cause.

Ans. How say'st thou, we are free ?—
There may have raged, within Palermo's walls,
Some brief wild tumult ; but too well I know
They call the stranger lord.

Vit. Who calls the *dead*
Conqueror or lord ? Hush ! breathe it not aloud,
The wild winds must not hear it ! Yet again,
I tell thee we are free !

Ans. Thine eye hath look'd
On fearful deeds, for still their shadows hang
O'er its dark orb. Speak ! I adjure thee : say,
How hath this work been wrought ?

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Vit. Peace! ask me not!
Why shouldst *thou* hear a tale to send thy blood
Back on its fount? We cannot wake them now!
The storm is in my soul, but *they* are all
At rest!—Ay, sweetly may the slaughter'd babe
By its dead mother sleep; and warlike men,
Who midst the slain have slumber'd oft before,
Making their shield their pillow, may repose
Well, now their toils are done.—Is't not enough?

Con. Merciful heaven! have such things been?
And yet
There is no shade come o'er the laughing sky!
—I am an outcast now.

Ans. O Thou whose ways
Clouds mantle fearfully! of all the blind
But terrible ministers that work thy wrath,
How much is *man* the fiercest! Others know
Their limits—yes! the earthquakes, and the storms,
And the volcanoes!—he alone o'erleaps
The bounds of retribution! Couldst thou gaze,
Vittoria! with thy woman's heart and eye,
On such dread scenes unmoved?

Vit. Was it for *me*
To stay th' avenging sword? No, though it pierced
My very soul! Hark! hark! what thrilling shrieks
Ring through the air around me! Canst thou not
Bid them be hush'd? Oh!—look not on me thus!

Ans. Lady! thy thoughts lend sternness to the looks
Which are but sad! Have all then perish'd?—*all?*
Was there no mercy!

Vit. Mercy! it hath been

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A word forbidden as th' unhallow'd names
Of evil powers. Yet one there was who dared
To own the guilt of pity, and to aid
The victims !—but in vain. Of him no more !
He is a traitor, and a traitor's death
Will be his meed.

Con. (*coming forward.*) Oh, heaven !—his name, his name !
Is it—it cannot be !

Vit. (*starting.*) *Thou* here, pale girl !
I deem'd thee with the dead ! How hast thou 'scaped
The snare ! Who saved thee, last of all thy race !
Was it not he of whom I spake e'en now,
Raimond di Procida ?

Con. It is enough.
Now the storm breaks upon me, and I sink.
Must he too die ?

Vit. Is it e'en so ? Why then,
Live on—thou hast the arrow at thy heart !
" Fix not on me thy sad reproachful eyes"—
I mean not to betray thee. Thou may'st live !
Why should death bring thee his oblivious balms !
He visits but the happy. Didst thou ask
If Raimond too must die ? It is as sure
As that his blood is on *thy* head, for thou
Didst win him to this treason.

Con. When did men
Call mercy *treason ?* Take my life, but save
My noble Raimond !

Vit. Maiden ! he must die.
E'en now the youth before his judges stands ;
And they are men who, to the voice of prayer,

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Are as the rock is to the murmur'd sigh
Of summer-waves !—ay, though a father sit
On their tribunal. Bend thou not to me.
What wouldst thou ?

Con. Mercy !—Oh ! wert thou to plead
But with a look, e'en yet he might be saved !
If thou hast ever loved——

Vit. If I have loved ?
It is *that* love forbids me to relent.
I am what it hath made me. O'er my soul
Lightning hath pass'd, and sear'd it. Could I weep
I then might pity—but it will not be.

Con. Oh ! thou wilt yet relent, for woman's heart
Was form'd to suffer and to melt.

Vit. Away !
Why should I pity thee ? Thou wilt but prove
What I have known before—and yet I live !
Nature is strong, and it may all be borne—
The sick impatient yearning of the heart
For that which is not ; and the weary sense
Of the dull void, wherewith our homes have been
Circled by death ; yes, all things may be borne !
All, save remorse. But I will *not* bow down
My spirit to that dark power ; there *was* no guilt !
Anselmo ! wherefore didst thou talk of guilt ?

Ans. Ay, thus doth sensitive conscience quicken thought,
Lending reproachful voices to a breeze,
Keen lightning to a look.

Vit. Leave me in peace !
Is 't not enough that I should have a sense
Of things thou canst not see, all wild and dark,

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And of unearthly whispers, haunting me
With dread suggestions, but that *thy* cold words,
Old man, should gall me, too? Must all conspire
Against me?——O thou beautiful spirit! wont
To shine upon my dreams with looks of love,
Where art *thou* vanish'd? Was it not the thought
Of thee which urged me to the fearful task,
And wilt thou now forsake me? I must seek
The shadowy woods again, for there, perchance,
Still may thy voice be in my twilight-paths;
—Here I but meet despair! [*Exit* VITTORIA.

Ans. (*to* CONSTANCE.) Despair not *thou*,
My daughter! He that purifies the heart
With grief will lend it strength.

Con. (*endeavouring to rouse herself.*) Did she not say
That some one was to die?

Ans. I tell thee not
Thy pangs are vain—for nature will have way.
Earth must have tears: yet in a heart like thine,
Faith may not yield its place.

Con. Have I not heard
Some fearful tale?—Who said that there should rest
Blood on my soul? What blood? I never bore
Hatred, kind father! unto aught that breathes:
Raimond doth know it well. Raimond!—High heaven!
It bursts upon me now! And he must die!
For my sake—e'en for mine!

Ans. Her words were strange,
And her proud mind seem'd half to frenzy wrought;
—Perchance this may not be.

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Con. It *must* not be.
Why do I linger here? [*She rises to depart.*
Ans. Where wouldst thou go?
Con. To give their stern and unrelenting hearts
A victim in his stead.
Ans. Stay! wouldst thou rush
On certain death?
Con. I may not falter now.
—Is not the life of woman all bound up
In her affections? What hath *she* to do
In this bleak world alone? It may be well
For *man* on his triumphal course to move,
Uncumber'd by soft bonds; but *we* were born
For love and grief.
Ans. Thou fair and gentle thing,
Unused to meet a glance which doth not speak
Of tenderness or homage! how shouldst *thou*
Bear the hard aspect of unpitying men,
Or face the King of Terrors?
Con. There is strength
Deep-bedded in our hearts, of which we reck
But little, till the shafts of heaven have pierced
Its fragile dwelling. Must not earth be rent
Before her gems are found?—Oh! now I feel
Worthy the generous love which hath not shunn'd
To look on death for me! My heart hath given
Birth to as deep a courage, and a faith
As high in its devotion. [*Exit* CONSTANCE.
Ans. She is gone!
Is it to perish?—God of mercy! lend
Power to my voice, that so its prayer may save
This pure and lofty creature! I will follow—

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But her young footstep and heroic heart
Will bear her to destruction, faster far
Than I can track her path. [*Exit* ANSELMO.

SCENE III.—*Hall of a Public Building.*

PROCIDA, MONTALBA, GUIDO, *and others, seated as on a Tribunal.*

Pro. The morn lower'd darkly; but the sun hath now,
With fierce and angry splendour, through the clouds
Burst forth, as if impatient to behold
This our high triumph.—Lead the prisoner in.
[RAIMOND *is brought in, fettered and guarded.*
Why, what a bright and fearless brow is here!
Is this man guilty? Look on him, Montalba!
Mon. Be firm. Should justice falter at a look?
Pro. No, thou say'st well. Her eyes are filleted,
Or should be so. Thou, that dost call thyself—
But no! I will not breathe a traitor's name—
Speak! thou art arraign'd of treason.
Raim. I arraign
You, before whom I stand, of darker guilt,
In the bright face of heaven; and your own hearts
Give echo to the charge. Your very looks
Have ta'en the stamp of crime, and seem to shrink,
With a perturb'd and haggard wildness, back
From the too-searching light. Why, what hath wrought
This change on noble brows? There is a voice
With a deep answer, rising from the blood

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Your hands have coldly shed ! Ye are of those
From whom just men recoil with curdling veins,
All thrill'd by life's abhorrent consciousness,
And sensitive feeling of a *murderer's* presence.
—Away ! come down from your tribunal seat,
Put off your robes of state, and let your mien
Be pale and humbled ; for ye bear about you
That which repugnant earth doth sicken at,
More than the pestilence. That I should live
To see my father shrink !

Pro. Montalba, speak !
There's something chokes my voice—but fear me not.

Mon. If we must plead to vindicate our acts,
Be it when thou hast made thine own look clear,
Most eloquent youth ! What answer canst thou make
To this our charge of treason ?

Raim. I will plead
That cause before a mightier judgment-throne,
Where mercy is not guilt. But here I feel
Too buoyantly the glory and the joy
Of my free spirit's whiteness ; for e'en now
The embodied hideousness of crime doth seem
Before me glaring out. Why, I saw *thee*,
Thy foot upon an aged warrior's breast,
Trampling out nature's last convulsive heavings.
And thou *thy* sword—O valiant chief !—is yet
Red from the noble stroke which pierced at once
A mother and the babe, whose little life
Was from her bosom drawn !—Immortal deeds
For bards to hymn !

Gui. (*aside.*) I look upon his mien,

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And waver. Can it be? My boyish heart
Deem'd him so noble once! Away, weak thoughts!
Why should I shrink, as if the guilt were *mine*,
From his proud glance?

Pro. O thou dissembler! thou,
So skill'd to clothe with virtue's generous flush
The hollow cheek of cold hypocrisy,
That, with thy guilt made manifest, I can scarce
Believe thee guilty!—look on me, and say
Whose was the secret warning voice, that saved
De Couci with his bands, to join our foes,
And forge new fetters for th' indignant land?
Whose was *this* treachery? [*Shows him papers.*
Who hath promised here
(Belike to appease the manès of the dead)
At midnight to unfold Palermo's gates,
And welcome in the foe? Who hath done this,
But thou—a tyrant's friend?

Raim. Who hath done this?
Father!—If I may call thee by that name—
Look, with thy piercing eye, on those whose smiles
Were masks that hid their daggers. *There*, perchance,
May lurk what loves not light too strong. For me,
I know but this—there needs no deep research
To prove the truth that murderers may be traitors,
Even to each other.

Pro. (*to* MONTALBA.) His unaltering cheek
Still vividly doth hold its natural hue,
And his eye quails not! Is this innocence?

Mon. No! 'tis th' unshrinking hardihood of crime.
—Thou bear'st a gallant mien. But where is she

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Whom thou hast barter'd fame and life to save,
The fair Provençal maid? What! know'st thou not
That this alone were guilt, to death allied?
Was't not our law that he who spared a foe
(And is she not of that detested race?)
Should thenceforth be amongst us *as* a foe?
—Where hast thou borne her?—speak!

Raim. That heaven, whose eye
Burns up thy soul with its far-searching glance,
Is with her: she is safe.

Pro. And by that word
Thy doom is seal'd. Oh, God! that I had died
Before this bitter hour, in the full strength
And glory of my heart!

CONSTANCE *enters, and rushes to* RAIMOND.

Con. Oh! art thou found?
—But yet, to find thee thus! Chains, chains for *thee!*
My brave, my noble love! Off with these bonds;
Let him be free as air: for I am come
To be your victim now.

Raim. Death has no pang
More keen than this. Oh! wherefore art thou here?
I could have died so calmly, deeming thee
Saved, and at peace.

Con. At peace!—And thou hast thought
Thus poorly of my love! But woman's breast
Hath strength to suffer too. Thy father sits
On this tribunal; Raimond, which is he?

Raim. My father! who hath lull'd thy gentle heart
With that false hope? Beloved! gaze around—

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See if thine eye can trace a father's soul
In the dark looks bent on us.

[CONSTANCE, *after earnestly examining the countenances of the Judges, falls at the feet of* PROCIDA.

Con. Thou art he!
Nay, turn thou not away! for I beheld
Thy proud lip quiver, and a watery mist
Pass o'er thy troubled eye; and then I knew
Thou wert his father! Spare him! take *my* life!
In truth, a worthless sacrifice for his,
But yet mine all. Oh! *he* hath still to run
A long bright race of glory.

Raim. Constance, peace!
I look upon thee, and my failing heart
Is as a broken reed.

Con. (*still addressing* PROCIDA.) Oh, yet relent!
If 'twas his crime to rescue *me*, behold
I come to be the atonement! Let him live
To crown thine age with honour. In thy heart
There's a deep conflict; but great Nature pleads
With an o'ermastering voice, and thou wilt yield!
—Thou *art* his father!

Pro. (*after a pause.*) Maiden, thou'rt deceived!
I am as calm as that dead pause of nature
Ere the full thunder bursts. A judge is not
Father or friend. Who calls this man my son?
—*My* son! Ay! thus his mother proudly smiled—
But she was noble! Traitors stand alone,
Loosed from all ties. Why should I trifle thus?
—Bear her away!

Raim. (*starting forward.*) And whither?

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Mon. Unto death.
Why should she live, when all her race have perish'd?
Con. (*sinking into the arms of* RAIMOND.)
Raimond, farewell! Oh! when thy star hath risen
To its bright noon, forget not, best beloved!
I died for thee.
Raim. High Heaven! thou see'st these things,
And yet endurest them! Shalt thou die for me,
Purest and loveliest being?—but our fate
May not divide us long. Her cheek is cold—
Her deep blue eyes are closed: should this be death
—If thus, there yet were mercy! Father, father!
Is thy heart human?
Pro. Bear her hence, I say!
Why must my soul be torn?

ANSELMO *enters, holding a Crucifix.*

Ans. Now, by this sign
Of heaven's prevailing love! ye shall not harm
One ringlet of her head. How! is there not
Enough of blood upon your burthen'd souls?
Will not the visions of your midnight couch
Be wild and dark enough, but ye must heap
Crime upon crime? Be ye content: your dreams,
Your councils, and your banquetings, will yet
Be haunted by the voice which doth not sleep,
E'en though this maid be spared! Constance, look up!
Thou shalt not die.
Raim. Oh! death e'en nowhath veil'd
The light of her soft beauty. Wake, my love!
Wake at my voice!

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Pro. Anselmo, lead her hence,
And let her live, but never meet my sight.
—Begone! my heart will burst.
Raim. One last embrace!
—Again life's rose is opening on her cheek;
Yet must we part. So love is crushed on earth!
But there are brighter worlds!—Farewell, farewell!
[*He gives her to the care of* ANSELMO.
Con. (*slowly recovering.*) There was a voice which call'd me. Am I not
A spirit freed from earth? Have I not pass'd
The bitterness of death?
Ans. Oh, haste away!
Con. Yes! Raimond calls me. He too is released
From his cold bondage. We are free at last,
And all is well. Away!
[*She is led out by* ANSELMO.
Raim. The pang is o'er,
And I have but to die.
Mon. Now, Procida,
Comes thy great task. Wake! summon to thine aid
All thy deep soul's commanding energies;
For thou—a chief among us—must pronounce
The sentence of thy son. It rests with thee.
Pro. Ha! ha! Men's hearts should be of softer mould
Than in the elder time. Fathers could doom
Their children *then* with an unfaltering voice,
And we must tremble thus! Is it not said
That nature grows degenerate, earth being now
So full of days?
Mon. Rouse up thy mighty heart.

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Pro. Ay, thou say'st right. There yet are souls which tower
As landmarks to mankind. Well, what's the task?
—There is a man to be condemn'd, you say?
Is he then guilty?
All. Thus we deem of him,
With one accord.
Pro. And hath he naught to plead?
Raim. Naught but a soul unstain'd.
Pro. Why, that is little.
Stains on the soul are but as conscience deems them,
And conscience may be sear'd. But for this sentence!
—Was't not the penalty imposed on man,
E'en from creation's dawn, that he must die?
—It was: thus making guilt a sacrifice
Unto eternal justice; and we but
Obey heaven's mandate when we cast dark souls
To th' elements from among us. Be it so!
Such be *his* doom! I have said. Ay, now my heart
Is girt with adamant, whose cold weight doth press
Its gaspings down. Off! let me breathe in freedom!
—Mountains are on my breast! [*He sinks back.*
Mon. Guards, bear the prisoner
Back to his dungeon.
Raim. Father! oh, look up;
Thou art my father still!
Gui. (*leaving the tribunal, throws himself on the neck of* RAIMOND). Oh! Raimond, Raimond!
If it should be that I have wrong'd thee, say
Thou dost forgive me.

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Raim. Friend of my young days,
So may all-pitying heaven! [RAIMOND *is led out.*
Pro. Whose voice was that?
Where is he?—gone? Now I may breathe once more
In the free air of heaven. Let us away.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A prison dimly lighted.*

RAIMOND *sleeping.* PROCIDA *enters.*

Pro. (*gazing upon him earnestly.*) Can he then
sleep? Th' overshadowing night hath wrapt
Earth at her stated hours; the stars have set
Their burning watch; and all things hold their
course
Of wakefulness and rest; yet hath not sleep
Sat on mine eyelids since—but this avails not!
And thus *he* slumbers! "Why, this mien doth seem
As if its soul were but one lofty thought
Of an immortal destiny!"—his brow
Is calm as waves whereon the midnight heavens
Are imaged silently. Wake, Raimond! wake!
Thy rest is deep.
Raim. (*starting up.*) My father! Wherefore here?
I am prepared to die, yet would I not
Fall by *thy* hand.
Pro. 'Twas not for *this* I came.
Raim. Then wherefore? and upon thy lofty brow
Why burns the troubled flush?

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Pro. Perchance 'tis shame.
Yes, it may well be shame !—for I have striven
With nature's feebleness, and been o'erpower'd.
—Howe'er it be, 'tis not for *thee* to gaze,
Noting it thus. Rise, let me loose thy chains.
Arise, and follow me ; but let thy step
Fall without sound on earth : I have prepared
The means for thy escape.
Raim. What ! *thou !* the austere
The inflexible Procida ! hast *thou* done this,
Deeming me guilty still !
Pro. Upbraid me not !
It is even so. There have been nobler deeds
By Roman fathers done,—but I am weak.
Therefore, again I say, arise ! and haste,
For the night wanes. Thy fugitive course must be
To realms beyond the deep ; so let us part
In silence, and for ever.
Raim. Let *him* fly
Who holds no deep asylum in his breast
Wherein to shelter from the scoffs of men ;
—I can sleep calmly here.
Pro. Art thou in love
With death and infamy, that so thy choice
Is made, lost boy ! when freedom courts thy grasp ?
Raim. Father ! to set th' irrevocable seal
Upon that shame wherewith ye have branded me,
There needs but flight. What should I bear from this,
My native land ?—A blighted name, to rise
And part me, with its dark remembrances,
For ever from the sunshine ! O'er my soul

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Bright shadowings of a nobler destiny
Float in dim beauty through the gloom ; but here
On earth my hopes are closed.

Pro. *Thy* hopes are closed !
And what were they to mine ?—Thou wilt not fly !
Why, let all traitors flock to thee, and learn
How proudly guilt can talk !—Let fathers rear
Their offspring henceforth, as the free wild-birds
Foster their young : when these can mount alone,
Dissolving nature's bonds, why should it not
Be so with us ?

Raim. Oh, father ! now I feel
What high prerogatives belong to death.
He hath a deep though voiceless eloquence,
To which I leave my cause. "His solemn veil
Doth with mysterious beauty clothe our virtues,
And in its vast oblivious folds, for ever
Give shelter to our faults." When I am gone,
The mists of passion which have dimm'd my name
Will melt like day-dreams ; and my memory then
Will be—not what it should have been—for I
Must pass without my fame—but yet unstain'd
As a clear morning dewdrop. Oh ! the grave
Hath rights inviolate as a sanctuary's,
And they should be my own !

Pro. Now, by just heaven
I will not thus be tortured !—Were my heart
But of thy guilt or innocence assured,
I could be calm again. "But in this wild
Suspense—this conflict and vicissitude
Of opposite feelings and convictions——What !
Hath it been mine to temper and to bend

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All spirits to my purpose? have I raised
With a severe and passionless energy,
From the dread mingling of their elements,
Storms which have rocked the earth?—and shall I now
Thus fluctuate as a feeble reed, the scorn
And plaything of the winds?" Look on me, boy!
Guilt never dared to meet these eyes, and keep
Its heart's dark secret close.—O pitying heaven!
Speak to my soul with some dread oracle,
And tell me which is truth.

Raim. I will not plead.
I will not call th' Omnipotent to attest
My innocence. No, father! in thy heart
I know my birthright shall be soon restored;
Therefore I look to death, and bid thee speed
The great absolver.

Pro. O my son! my son!
We will not part in wrath! The sternest hearts,
Within their proud and guarded fastnesses,
Hide something still, round which their tendrils cling
With a close grasp, unknown to those who dress
Their love in smiles. And such wert thou to me!
The all which taught me that my soul was cast
In nature's mould. And I must now hold on
My desolate course alone! Why, be it thus!
He that doth guide a nation's star, should dwell
High o'er the clouds, in regal solitude,
Sufficient to himself.

Raim. Yet, on the summit,
When with her bright wings glory shadows thee,

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Forget not him who coldly sleeps beneath,
Yet might have soar'd as high!
Pro. No, fear thou not!
Thou'lt be remember'd long. The canker-worm
O' th' heart is ne'er forgotten.
Raim. "Oh! not thus—
I would not *thus* be thought of."
Pro. Let me deem
Again that thou art base!—for thy bright looks,
Thy glorious mien of fearlessness and truth,
Then would not haunt me as the avenging powers
Follow'd the parricide. Farewell, farewell!
I have no tears. Oh! thus thy mother look'd,
When, with a sad, yet half-triumphant smile,
All radiant with deep meaning, from her deathbed
She gave thee to my arms.
Raim. Now death has lost
His sting, since thou believ'st me innocent!
Pro. (*wildly.*) *Thou* innocent! Am I thy murderer, then?
Away! I tell thee thou hast made my name
A scorn to men! No! I will *not* forgive thee;
A traitor! What! the blood of Procida
Filling a traitor's veins? Let the earth drink it.
Thou wouldst receive our foes!—but they shall meet
From thy perfidious lips a welcome, cold
As death can make it. Go, prepare thy soul!
Raim. Father! yet hear me!
Pro. No! thou'rt skill'd to make
E'en shame look fair. Why should I linger thus?
[*Going to leave the prison, he turns back for a moment.*

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If there be aught—if aught—for which thou need'st
Forgiveness—not of me, but that dread power
From whom no heart is veil'd—delay thou not
Thy prayer,—time hurries on.

Raim. I am prepared.

Pro. 'Tis well. [*Exit* PROCIDA.

Raim. Men talk of torture!—Can they wreak
Upon the sensitive and shrinking frame,
Half the mind bears and lives? My spirit feels
Bewilder'd; on its powers this twilight gloom
Hangs like a weight of earth. It should be morn;
Why, then, perchance, a beam of heaven's bright sun
Hath pierced, ere now, the grating of my dungeon,
Telling of hope and mercy!

[*Exit into an inner cell.*

SCENE II.—*A Street of Palermo.*

Many Citizens assembled.

1*st Cit.* The morning breaks; his time is almost come:
Will he be led this way?

2*d Cit.* Ay, so 'tis said,
To die before that gate through which he purposed
The foe should enter in!

3*d Cit.* 'Twas a vile plot!
And yet I would my hands were pure as his
From the deep stain of blood. Did'st hear the sounds
I' the air last night?

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2d Cit. Since the great work of slaughter,
Who hath not heard them duly at those hours
Which should be silent?

3d Cit. Oh! the fearful mingling,
The terrible mimicry of human voices,
In every sound, which to the heart doth speak
Of woe and death.

2d Cit. Ay, there was woman's shrill
And piercing cry; and the low feeble wail
Of dying infants; and the half-suppress'd
Deep groan of man in his last agonies!
And, now and then, there swell'd upon the breeze
Strange, savage bursts of laughter, wilder far
Than all the rest.

1st Cit. Of our own fate, perchance,
These awful midnight wailings may be deem'd
An ominous prophecy. Should France regain
Her power among us, doubt not, we shall have
Stern reckoners to account with.—Hark!

[*The sound of trumpets heard at a distance.*

2d Cit. 'Twas but
A rushing of the breeze.

3d Cit. E'en now, 'tis said,
The hostile bands approach.

[*The sound is heard gradually drawing nearer.*

2d Cit. Again! that sound
Was no illusion. Nearer yet it swells—
They come, they come!

PROCIDA *enters.*

Pro. The foe is at your gates;
But hearts and hands prepared shall meet his onset.
Why are ye loitering here?

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Cit. My lord, we came—

Pro. Think ye I know not wherefore?—'twas to see
A fellow-being die! Ay, 'tis a sight
Man loves to look on; and the tenderest hearts
Recoil, and yet withdraw not from the scene.
For *this* ye came. What! is our nature fierce,
Or is there that in mortal agony
From which the soul, exulting in its strength,
Doth learn immortal lessons? Hence, and arm!
Ere the night-dews descend, ye will have seen
Enough of death; for this must be a day
Of battle! 'Tis the hour which troubled souls
Delight in, for its rushing storms are wings
Which bear them up! Arm! arm! 'tis for your homes,
And all that lends them loveliness—Away!

[*Exeunt.*

Scene III.—*Prison of* Raimond.

Raimond, Anselmo.

Raim. And Constance then is safe! Heaven bless thee, father!
Good angels bear such comfort.

Ans. I have found
A safe asylum for thine honour'd love,
Where she may dwell until serener days,
With Saint Rosalia's gentlest daughters—those
Whose hallow'd office is to tend the bed
Of pain and death, and soothe the parting soul

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With their soft hymns: and therefore are they call'd
"Sisters of Mercy."
Raim. Oh! that name, my Constance,
Befits thee well! E'en in our happiest days,
There was a depth of tender pensiveness
Far in thine eyes' dark azure, speaking ever
Of pity and mild grief. Is she at peace?
Ans. Alas! what should I say?
Raim. Why did I ask?
Knowing the deep and full devotedness
Of her young heart's affections? Oh! the thought
Of my untimely fate will haunt her dreams,
Which should have been so tranquil!—and her soul,
Whose strength was but the lofty gift of love,
Even unto death will sicken.
Ans. All that faith
Can yield of comfort, shall assuage her woes;
And still, whate'er betide, the light of heaven
Rests on her gentle heart. But thou, my son!
Is thy young spirit master'd, and prepared
For nature's fearful and mysterious change?
Raim. Ay, father! of my brief remaining task
The least part is to die! And yet the cup
Of life still mantled brightly to my lips,
Crown'd with that sparkling bubble, whose proud name
Is—glory! Oh! my soul, from boyhood's morn
Hath nursed such mighty dreams! It was my hope
To leave a name, whose echo from the abyss
Of time should rise, and float upon the winds

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Into the far hereafter; there to be
A trumpet-sound, a voice from the deep tomb,
Murmuring—Awake!—Arise! But this is past!
Erewhile, and it had seem'd enough of shame
To sleep *forgotten* in the dust; but now—
Oh God!—the undying record of my grave
Will be—Here sleeps a traitor!—One whose crime
Was—to deem brave men might find nobler weapons
Than the cold murderer's dagger!

Ans. Oh! my son,
Subdue these troubled thoughts! Thou wouldst not change
Thy lot for theirs, o'er whose dark dreams will hang
The avenging shadows, which the blood-stain'd soul
Doth conjure from the dead!

Raim. Thou'rt right. I would not.
Yet 'tis a weary task to school the heart,
Ere years or griefs have tamed its fiery spirit
Into that still and passive fortitude,
Which is but learn'd from suffering. Would the hour
To hush these passionate throbbings were at hand!

Ans. It will not be to-day. Hast thou not heard
—But no—the rush, the trampling, and the stir
Of this great city, arming in her haste,
Pierce not these dungeon-depths. The foe hath reach'd
Our gates, and all Palermo's youth, and all
Her warrior men, are marshall'd, and gone forth,
In that high hope which makes realities,
To the red field. Thy father leads them on.

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Raim. (*starting up.*) They are gone forth! my
father leads them on!
All—all Palermo's youth! No! *one* is left,
Shut out from glory's race! They are gone
forth!
Ay, now the soul of battle is abroad—
It burns upon the air! The joyous winds
Are tossing warrior-plumes, the proud white foam
Of battle's roaring billows! On my sight
The vision bursts—it maddens! 'tis the flash,
The lightning-shock of lances, and the cloud
Of rushing arrows, and the broad full blaze
Of helmets in the sun! The very steed
With his majestic rider glorying shares
The hour's stern joy, and waves his floating mane
As a triumphant banner! Such things are
Even now—and I am here!

Ans. Alas, be calm!
To the same grave ye press,—thou that dost pine
Beneath a weight of chains, and they that rule
The fortunes of the fight.

Raim. Ay! *Thou* canst feel
The calm thou wouldst impart; for unto thee
All men alike, the warrior and the slave,
Seem, as thou say'st, but pilgrims, pressing on
To the same bourne. Yet call it not the same:
Their graves who fall in this day's fight will be
As altars to their country, visited
By fathers with their children, bearing wreaths,
And chanting hymns in honour of the dead:
Will mine be such?

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VITTORIA *rushes in wildly, as if pursued.*

Vit. Anselmo! art thou found!
Haste, haste, or all is lost! Perchance thy voice,
Whereby they deem heaven speaks, thy lifted cross,
And prophet mien, may stay the fugitives,
Or shame them back to die.

Ans. The fugitives!
What words are these? The sons of Sicily
Fly not before the foe?

Vit. That I should say
It is too true!

Ans. And thou—thou bleedest, lady!

Vit. Peace! heed not me when Sicily is lost!
I stood upon the walls, and watch'd our bands,
As, with their ancient royal banner spread,
Onward they march'd. The combat was begun,
The fiery impulse given, and valiant men
Had seal'd their freedom with their blood—when, lo!
That false Alberti led his recreant vassals
To join th' invader's host.

Raim. His country's curse
Rest on the slave for ever!

Vit. Then distrust,
E'en of their noble leaders, and dismay,
That swift contagion, on Palermo's bands
Came like a deadly blight. They fled!—Oh shame!
E'en now they fly! Ay, through the city gates
They rush, as if all Etna's burning streams
Pursued their wingèd steps!

Raim. Thou hast not named
Their chief—Di Procida—*he* doth not fly?

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Vit. No! like a kingly lion in the toils,
Daring the hunters yet, he proudly strives:
But all in vain! The few that breast the storm,
With Guido and Montalba, by his side,
Fight but for graves upon the battle-field.

Raim. And I am *here!* Shall there be power,
O God!
In the roused energies of fierce despair,
To burst my heart—and not to rend my chains?
Oh, for one moment of the thunderbolt
To set the strong man free!

Vit. (*after gazing upon him earnestly.*) Why,
'twere a deed
Worthy the fame and blessing of all time,
To loose thy bonds, thou son of Procida!
Thou art no traitor!—from thy kindled brow
Looks out thy lofty soul! Arise! go forth!
And rouse the noble heart of Sicily
Unto high deeds again. Anselmo, haste;
Unbind him! Let my spirit still prevail,
Ere I depart—for the strong hand of death
Is on me now. [*She sinks back against a pillar.*

Ans. Oh, heaven! the life-blood streams
Fast from thy heart—thy troubled eyes grow dim.
Who hath done this?

Vit. Before the gates I stood,
And in the name of him, the loved and lost,
With whom I soon shall be, all vainly strove
To stay the shameful flight. Then from the foe,
Fraught with my summons, to his viewless home,
Came the fleet shaft which pierced me.

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Ans. Yet, oh yet,
It may not be too late. Help, help!
Vit. (*to Raimond.*) Away!
Bright is the hour which brings thee liberty!

Attendants enter.

Haste, be those fetters riven! Unbar the gates,
And set the captive free!
(*The Attendants seem to hesitate.*) Know ye not *her*
Who should have worn your country's diadem?
Att. Oh, lady! we obey.

[*They take off* RAIMOND'S *chains. He springs up exultingly.*

Raim. Is this no dream?
Mount, eagle! thou art free! Shall I then die
Not 'midst the mockery of insulting crowds,
But on the field of banners, where the brave
Are striving for an immortality?
It is e'en so! Now for bright arms of proof,
A helm, a keen-edged falchion, and e'en yet
My father may be saved!
Vit. Away be strong!
And let thy battle-word, to rule the storm,
Be—*Conradin.* [*He rushes out.*
Oh! for one hour of life,
To hear that name blent with th' exulting shout
Of victory! It will not be! A mightier power
Doth summon me away.
Ans. To purer worlds
Raise thy last thoughts in hope.
Vit. Yes! *he* is there,
All glorious in his beauty!—Conradin!

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Death parted us, and death shall reunite!
He will not stay—it is all darkness now!
Night gathers o'er my spirit. [*She dies.*
Ans. She is gone!
It is an awful hour which stills the heart
That beat so proudly once. Have mercy, heaven!
[*He kneels beside her.*

SCENE IV.—*Before the Gates of Palermo.*

Sicilians flying tumultuously towards the Gates.

Voices (*without.*) Montjoy! Montjoy! St Denis for Anjou!
Provençals, on!
Sicilians. Fly, fly, or all is lost!

[RAIMOND *appears in the gateway, armed, and carrying a banner.*

Raim. Back, back, I say! ye men of Sicily!
All is not lost! Oh! shame! A few brave hearts
In such a cause, ere now, have set their breasts
Against the rush of thousands, and sustain'd,
And made the shock recoil. Ay, man, free man,
Still to be call'd so, hath achieved such deeds
As heaven and earth have marvell'd at; and souls,
Whose spark yet slumbers with the days to come,
Shall burn to hear, transmitting brightly thus
Freedom from race to race! Back! or prepare
Amidst your hearths, your bowers, your very shrines,
To bleed and die in vain! Turn!—follow me!
"Conradin, Conradin!"—for Sicily
His spirit fights! Remember "Conradin!"
[*They begin to rally round him.*

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Ay, this is well!—Now, follow me, and charge!

[*The Provençals rush in, but are repulsed by the Sicilians.—Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Part of the Field of Battle.*

MONTALBA *enters, wounded, and supported by* RAIMOND, *whose face is concealed by his helmet.*

Raim. Here rest thee, warrior.
Mon. Rest! ay, death is rest,
And such will soon be mine. But, thanks to *thee*,
I shall not die a captive. Brave Sicilian!
These lips are all unused to soothing words,
Or I should bless the valour which hath won,
For my last hour, the proud free solitude
Wherewith my soul would gird itself. Thy name?
Raim. 'Twill be no music to thine ear, Montalba.
Gaze—read it thus!
[*He lifts the visor of his helmet.*
Mon. Raimond di Procida!
Raim. Thou hast pursued me with a bitter hate:
But fare thee well! Heaven's peace be with thy soul!
I must away. One glorious effort more,
And this proud field is won. [*Exit* RAIMOND.
Mon. Am I thus humbled?
How my heart sinks within me! But 'tis death
(And he can tame the mightiest) hath subdued
My towering nature thus? Yet is he welcome!
That youth—'twas in his pride he rescued me!
I was his deadliest foe, and thus he proved

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His fearless scorn. Ha! ha! but he shall fail
To melt me into womanish feebleness.
There I still baffle him—the grave shall seal
My lips for ever—mortal shall not hear
Montalba say—"*forgive!*" [*He dies.*

SCENE VI.—*Another part of the Field.*

PROCIDA, GUIDO, *and other Sicilians.*

Pro. The day is ours; but he, the brave unknown,
Who turn'd the tide of battle—he whose path
Was victory—who hath seen him?

ALBERTI *is brought in, wounded and fettered.*

Alb. Procida!
Pro. Be silent, traitor! Bear him from my sight,
Unto your deepest dungeons.
Alb. In the grave
A nearer home awaits me. Yet one word
Ere my voice fail—thy son——
Pro. Speak, speak!
Alb. Thy son
Knows not a thought of guilt. That trait'rous plot
Was mine alone. [*He is led away.*
Pro. Attest it, earth and heaven!
My son is guiltless! Hear it, Sicily!
The blood of Procida is noble still!
My son! He lives, he lives! His voice shall speak
Forgiveness to his sire! His name shall cast
Its brightness o'er my soul!
Gui. O day of joy!

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The brother of my heart is worthy still
The lofty name he bears.

ANSELMO *enters.*

Pro. Anselmo, welcome!
In a glad hour we meet; for know, my son
Is guiltless.
Ans. And victorious! By his arm
All hath been rescued.
Pro. How!—the unknown——
Ans. Was he!
Thy noble Raimond!—by Vittoria's hand
Freed from his bondage, in that awful hour
When all was flight and terror.
Pro. Now my cup
Of joy too brightly mantles! Let me press
My warrior to a father's heart—and die;
For life hath naught beyond. Why comes he not?
Anselmo, lead me to my valiant boy!
Ans. Temper this proud delight.
Pro. What means that look?
He hath not fallen?
Ans. He lives.
Pro. Away, away!
Bid the wide city with triumphal pomp
Prepare to greet her victor. Let this hour
Atone for all his wrongs! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—*Garden of a Convent.*

RAIMOND *is led in wounded, leaning on Attendants.*

Raim. Bear me to no dull couch, but let me die

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In the bright face of nature! Lift my helm,
That I may look on heaven.
1st Att. (*to 2d Attendant.*) Lay him to rest
On this green sunny bank, and I will call
Some holy sister to his aid; but thou
Return unto the field, for high-born men
There need the peasant's aid. [*Exit 2d Attendant.*
(*To Raim.*) Here gentle hands
Shall tend thee, warrior; for, in these retreats,
They dwell whose vows devote them to the care
Of all that suffer. May'st thou live to bless them!
[*Exit 1st Attendant.*
Raim. Thus have I wish'd to die! 'Twas a proud strife!
My father bless'd th' unknown who rescued him,
(Bless'd him, alas, because unknown!) and Guido,
Beside me bravely struggling, call'd aloud,
"Noble Sicilian, on!" Oh! had they deem'd
'Twas I who led that rescue, they had spurn'd
Mine aid, though 'twas deliverance; and their looks
Had fallen like blights upon me. There is one,
Whose eye ne'er turn'd on mine but its blue light
Grew softer, trembling through the dewy mist
Raised by deep tenderness! Oh, might the soul,
Set in that eye, shine on me ere I perish!
—Is't not her voice?

CONSTANCE *enters speaking to a Nun, who turns into another path.*

Con. Oh! happy they, kind sister,
Whom thus ye tend; for it is theirs to fall
With brave men side by side, when the roused heart

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Beats proudly to the last! There are high souls
Whose hope was such a death, and 'tis denied!
[*She approaches* RAIMOND.
Young warrior, is there aught —— *Thou* here, my Raimond!
Thou here—and thus! Oh! is this joy or woe?
Raim. Joy! be it joy, my own, my blessèd love!
E'en on the grave's dim verge. Yes! it *is* joy!
My Constance! victors have been crown'd ere now,
With the green shining laurel, when their brows
Wore death's own impress—and it may be thus
E'en yet, with me! They freed me, when the foe
Had half prevailed, and I have proudly earn'd,
With my heart's dearest blood, the meed to die
Within thine arms.
Con. Oh! speak not thus—to die!
These wounds may yet be closed.
[*She attempts to bind his wounds.*
Look on me, love!
Why, there is *more* than life in thy glad mien—
'Tis full of hope! and from thy kindled eye
Breaks e'en unwonted light, whose ardent ray
Seems born to be immortal!
Raim. 'Tis e'en so!
The parting soul doth gather all her fires
Around her; all her glorious hopes, and dreams,
And burning aspirations, to illume
The shadowy dimness of the untrodden path
Which lies before her; and encircled thus,
Awhile she sits in dying eyes, and thence
Sends forth her bright farewell. Thy gentle cares

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Are vain, and yet I bless them.
Con. Say not vain;
The dying look not thus. We shall not part!
Raim. I have seen death ere now, and known him wear
Full many a changeful aspect.
Con. Oh! but none
Radiant as thine, my warrior! Thou wilt live!
Look round thee!—all is sunshine—is not this
A smiling world?
Raim. Ay, gentlest love, a world
Of joyous beauty and magnificence,
Almost too fair to leave! Yet must we tame
Our ardent hearts to this! Oh, weep thou not!
There is no home for liberty, or love,
Beneath these festal skies! Be not deceived;
My way lies far beyond! I shall be soon
That viewless thing, which, with its mortal weeds
Casting off meaner passions, yet, we trust,
Forgets not how to love!
Con. And must this be?
Heaven, thou art merciful!—Oh! bid our souls
Depart together!
Raim. Constance! there is strength
Within thy gentle heart, which hath been proved
Nobly, for me: arouse it once again!
Thy grief unmans me—and I fain would meet
That which approaches, as a brave man yields
With proud submission to a mightier foe.
—It is upon me now!
Con. I will be calm.
Let thy head rest upon my bosom, Raimond,

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And I will so suppress its quick deep sobs,
They shall but rock thee to thy rest. There is
A world (ay, let us seek it!) where no blight
Falls on the beautiful rose of youth, and there
I shall be with thee soon!

PROCIDA *and* ANSELMO *enter.* PROCIDA, *on seeing* RAIMOND, *starts back.*

Ans. Lift up thy head,
Brave youth, exultingly! for lo! thine hour
Of glory comes! Oh! doth it come too late?
E'en now the false Alberti hath confess'd
That guilty plot, for which thy life was doom'd
To be th' atonement.

Raim. 'Tis enough! Rejoice,
Rejoice, my Constance! for I leave a name
O'er which thou may'st weep proudly!
[*He sinks back.*
To thy breast
Fold me yet closer, for an icy dart
Hath touch'd my veins.

Con. And must thou leave me, Raimond?
Alas! thine eye grows dim—its wandering glance
Is full of dreams.

Raim. Haste, haste, and tell my father
I was no traitor!

Pro. (*rushing forward.*) To that father's heart
Return, forgiving all thy wrongs—return!
Speak to me, Raimond!—Thou wert ever kind,
And brave, and gentle! Say that all the past
Shall be forgiven! That word from none but thee

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My lips e'er ask'd.—Speak to me once, my boy,
My pride, my hope! And is it with thee thus?
Look on me yet!—Oh! must this woe be borne?
Raim. Off with this weight of chains! it is not meet
For a crown'd conqueror!—Hark! the trumpet's voice!
[*A sound of triumphant music is heard gradually approaching.*
Is't not a thrilling call? What drowsy spell
Benumbs me thus?—Hence! I am free again!
Now swell your festal strains—the field is won!
Sing me to glorious dreams. [*He dies.*
Ans. The strife is past;
There fled a noble spirit!
Con. Hush! he sleeps—
Disturb him not!
Ans. Alas! this is no sleep
From which the eye doth radiantly unclose:
Bow down thy soul, for earthly hope is o'er!
[*The music continues approaching.* GUIDO *enters with Citizens and Soldiers.*
Gui. The shrines are deck'd, the festive torches blaze—
Where is our brave deliverer? We are come
To crown Palermo's victor!
Ans. Ye come too late.
The voice of human praise doth send no echo
Into the world of spirits. [*The music ceases.*
Pro. (*after a pause.*) Is this dust
I look on—Raimond? 'Tis but sleep!—a smile
On his pale cheek sits proudly. Raimond, wake!

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Oh, God! and this was his triumphant day!
My son, my injured son!
Con. (*starting.*) Art *thou* his father?
I know thee now. Hence! with thy dark stern eye,
And thy cold heart! Thou canst not wake him now!
Away! he will not answer but to me—
For none like me hath loved him! He is mine!
Ye shall not rend him from me.
Pro. Oh! he *knew*
Thy love, poor maid! Shrink from me now no more!
He knew *thy* heart—but who shall tell him now
The depth, th' intenseness, and the agony
Of my suppress'd affection? I have learn'd
All his high worth in time to deck his grave.
Is there not power in the strong spirit's woe
To force an answer from the viewless world
Of the departed? Raimond!—speak!—forgive!
Raimond! my victor, my deliverer! hear!
Why, what a world is this! Truth ever bursts
On the dark soul too late: and glory crowns
Th' unconscious dead. There comes an hour to break
The mightiest hearts!—My son! my son! is this
A day of triumph! Ay, for thee alone!

[*He throws himself upon the body of* RAIMOND.

[*Curtain falls.*

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ANNOTATION

ON

"THE VESPERS OF PALERMO."

"*The Vespers of Palermo* was the earliest of the dramatic productions of our author. The period in which the scene is laid is sufficiently known from the title of the play. The whole is full of life and action. The same high strain of moral propriety marks this piece as all others of her writings. The hero is an enthusiast for glory, for liberty, and for virtue; and on his courage, his forbearance, the integrity of his love, making the firmness of his patriotism appear doubtful, rests the interest of the plot. It is worthy of remark, that some of its best parts have already found their way into an excellent selection of pieces for schools, and thus contribute to give lessons of morality to those who are most susceptible of the interest of tragedy.

"It may not be so generally remembered that the same historical event was made the subject of a French tragedy, about the same time that the English one was written, and by a poet now of great popularity in France. We hesitate not to give the preference to Mrs Hemans, for invention and interest, accurate delineation of character, and adherence to probability. Both the tragedies are written in a style of finished elegance."—PROFESSOR NORTON *in North American Review*, 1827.

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SONGS OF THE CID.

These ballads are not translations from the Spanish, but are founded upon some of the "wild and wonderful" traditions preserved in the romances of that language, and the ancient poem of the Cid.

THE CID'S DEPARTURE INTO EXILE.

With sixty knights in his gallant train,
Went forth the Campeador of Spain;
For wild sierras and plains afar,
He left the lands of his own Bivar.[1]

To march o'er field, and to watch in tent,
From his home in good Castile he went;
To the wasting siege and the battle's van,
—For the noble Cid was a banish'd man!

Through his olive-woods the morn-breeze play'd,
And his native streams wild music made,
And clear in the sunshine his vineyards lay,
When for march and combat he took his way.

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With a thoughtful spirit his way he took,
And he turn'd his steed for a parting look,
For a parting look at his own fair towers,
—Oh! the exile's heart hath weary hours!

The pennons were spread, and the band array'd,
But the Cid at the threshold a moment stay'd—
It *was* but a moment; the halls were lone,
And the gates of his dwelling all open thrown.

There was not a steed in the empty stall,
Nor a spear nor a cloak on the naked wall,
Nor a hawk on the perch, nor a seat at the door,
Nor the sound of a step on the hollow floor.[2]

Then a dim tear swell'd to the warrior's eye,
As the voice of his native groves went by;
And he said—"My foemen their wish have won:
Now the will of God be in all things done!"

But the trumpet blew, with its note of cheer,
And the winds of the morning swept off the tear,
And the fields of his glory lay distant far,
—He is gone from the towers of his own Bivar!

THE CID'S DEATHBED.

It was an hour of grief and fear
Within Valencia's walls,
When the blue spring-heaven lay still and clear
Above her marble halls.

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There were pale cheeks and troubled eyes,
And steps of hurrying feet,
Where the Zambra's[3] notes were wont to rise,
Along the sunny street.

It was an hour of fear and grief,
On bright Valencia's shore,
For Death was busy with her chief,
The noble Campeador.

The Moor-king's barks were on the deep,
With sounds and signs of war;
But the Cid was passing to his sleep,
In the silent Alcazar.

No moan was heard through the towers of state,
No weeper's aspect seen,
But by the couch Ximena sate,
With pale yet steadfast mien.[4]

Stillness was round the leader's bed,
Warriors stood mournful nigh,
And banners, o'er his glorious head,
Were drooping heavily.

And feeble grew the conquering hand,
And cold the valiant breast;
He had fought the battles of the land,
And his hour was come to rest.

What said the Ruler of the field?
—His voice is faint and low;

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The breeze that creeps o'er his lance and shield
Hath louder accents now.

"Raise ye no cry, and let no moan
Be made when I depart;
The Moor must hear no dirge's tone;
Be ye of mighty heart!

"Let the cymbal-clash and the trumpet-strain
From your walls ring far and shrill;
And fear ye not, for the saints of Spain
Shall grant you victory still.

"And gird my form with mail-array,
And set me on my steed;
So go ye forth on your funeral-way,
And God shall give you speed.

"Go with the dead in the front of war,
All arm'd with sword and helm,[5]
And march by the camp of King Bucar,
For the good Castilian realm.

"And let me slumber in the soil
Which gave my fathers birth;
I have closed my day of battle-toil,
And my course is done on earth."

—Now wave, ye glorious banners! wave![6]
Through the lattice a wind sweeps by,
And the arms, o'er the deathbed of the brave,
Send forth a hollow sigh.

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Now wave, ye banners of many a fight!
As the fresh wind o'er you sweeps;
The wind and the banners fall hush'd as night:
The Campeador—he sleeps!

Sound the battle-horn on the breeze of morn,
And swell out the trumpet's blast,
Till the notes prevail o'er the voice of wail,
For the noble Cid hath pass'd!

THE CID'S FUNERAL PROCESSION.

The Moor had beleaguer'd Valencia's towers,
And lances gleam'd up through her citron-bowers,
And the tents of the desert had girt her plain,
And camels were trampling the vines of Spain;
For the Cid was gone to rest.

There were men from wilds where the death-wind sweeps,
There were spears from hills where the lion sleeps,
There were bows from sands where the ostrich runs,
For the shrill horn of Afric had call'd her sons
To the battles of the West.

The midnight bell, o'er the dim seas heard,
Like the roar of waters, the air had stirr'd;
The stars were shining o'er tower and wave,
And the camp lay hush'd as a wizard's cave;
But the Christians woke that night.

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They rear'd the Cid on his barded steed,
Like a warrior mail'd for the hour of need,
And they fix'd the sword in the cold right hand,
Which had fought so well for his fathers' land,
And the shield from his neck hung bright.

There was arming heard in Valencia's halls,
There was vigil kept on the rampart walls;
Stars had not faded nor clouds turn'd red,
When the knights had girded the noble dead,
And the burial train moved out.

With a measured pace, as the pace of one,
Was the still death-march of the host begun;
With a silent step went the cuirass'd bands,
Like a lion's tread on the burning sands;
And they gave no battle-shout.

When the first went forth, it was midnight deep,
In heaven was the moon, in the camp was sleep;
When the last through the city's gates had gone,
O'er tent and rampart the bright day shone,
With a sun-burst from the sea.

There were knights five hundred went arm'd before,
And Bermudez the Cid's green standard bore;[6]
To its last fair field, with the break of morn,
Was the glorious banner in silence borne,
On the glad wind streaming free.

And the Campeador came stately then,
Like a leader circled with steel-clad men

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The helmet was down o'er the face of the dead,
But his steed went proud, by a warrior led,
For he knew that the Cid was there.

He was there, the Cid, with his own good sword,
And Ximena following her noble lord;
Her eye was solemn, her step was slow,
But there rose not a sound of war or woe,
Not a whisper on the air.

The halls in Valencia were still and lone,
The churches were empty, the masses done;
There was not a voice through the wide streets far,
Nor a foot-fall heard in the Alcazar,
—So the burial-train moved out.

With a measured pace, as the pace of one,
Was the still death-march of the host begun;
With a silent step went the cuirass'd bands,
Like a lion's tread on the burning sands;
—And they gave no battle-shout.

But the deep hills peal'd with a cry ere long,
When the Christians burst on the Paynim throng!
—With a sudden flash of the lance and spear,
And a charge of the war-steed in full career,
It was Alvar Fañez came![7]

He that was wrapt with no funeral shroud,
Had pass'd before like a threatening cloud!
And the storm rush'd down on the tented plain,

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And the Archer-Queen,[8] with her bands, lay slain ;
For the Cid upheld his fame.

Then a terror fell on the King Bucar,
And the Libyan kings who had join'd his war ;
And their hearts grew heavy, and died away,
And their hands could not wield an assagay,
For the dreadful things they saw !

For it seem'd where Minaya his onset made,
There were seventy thousand knights array'd,
All white as the snow on Nevada's steep,
And they came like the foam of a roaring deep ;
—'Twas a sight of fear and awe !

And the crested form of a warrior tall,
With a sword of fire went before them all ;
With a sword of fire, and a banner pale,
And a blood-red cross on his shadowy mail ;
He rode in the battle's van !

There was fear in the path of his dim white horse,
There was death in the giant-warrior's course !
Where his banner stream'd with its ghostly light,
Where his sword blazed out, there was hurrying flight—
For it seem'd not the sword of man !

The field and the river grew darkly red,
As the kings and leaders of Afric fled ;
There was work for the men of the Cid that day !
—They were weary at eve, when they ceased to slay,
As reapers whose task is done !

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The kings and the leaders of Afric fled !
The sails of their galleys in haste were spread ;
But the sea had its share of the Paynim slain,
And the bow of the desert was broke in Spain
—So the Cid to his grave pass'd on !

THE CID'S RISING.

'Twas the deep mid-watch of the silent night,
And Leon in slumber lay,
When a sound went forth in rushing might,
Like an army on its way ![9]
In the stillness of the hour,
When the dreams of sleep have power,
And men forget the day.

Through the dark and lonely streets it went,
Till the slumberers woke in dread ;—
The sound of a passing armament,
With the charger's stony tread.
There was heard no trumpet's peal,
But the heavy tramp of steel,
As a host's to combat led.

Through the dark and lonely streets it pass'd,
And the hollow pavement rang,
And the towers, as with a sweeping blast,
Rock'd to the stormy clang !
But the march of the viewless train
Went on to a royal fane,
Where a priest his night-hymn sang.

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There was knocking that shook the marble floor,
And a voice at the gate, which said—
"That the Cid Ruy Diez, the Campeador,
Was there in his arms array'd;
And that with him, from the tomb,
Had the Count Gonzalez come
With a host, uprisen to aid!

"And they came for the buried king that lay
At rest in that ancient fane;
For he must be arm'd on the battle-day,
With them to deliver Spain!"
—Then the march went sounding on,
And the Moors by noontide sun
Were dust on Tolosa's plain.

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NOTES.

Note 1, page 111, line 4.

Bivar, the supposed birthplace of the Cid, was a castle, about two leagues from Burgos.

Note 2, page 112, line 12.

Tornaba la cabeza, e estabalos catando :
Vio puertas abiertas, e uzos sin cañados,
Alcandaras vacias, sin pielles e sin mantos :
E sin falcones, e sin adtores mudados.
Sospirò mio Cid. *Poem of the Cid.*

Note 3, page 113, line 3.

The Zambra, a Moorish dance. When Valencia was taken by the Cid, many of the Moorish families chose to remain there, and reside under his government.

Note 4, page 113, line 16.

The calm fortitude of Ximena is frequently alluded to in the romances.

Note 5, page 114, line 16.

Banderas antiguas, tristes
De victorias un tiempo amadas,
Tremolando estan al viento
Y lloran aunque no hablan, &c.

Herder's translation of these romances (Der Cid, nach Spanischen Romanzen besungen) are remarkable for their spirit and scrupulous fidelity.

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Note 6, page 114, line 23, and page 116, line 22.

"And while they stood there they saw the Cid Ruy Diez coming up with three hundred knights; for he had not been in the battle, and they knew his *green pennon*."—SOUTHEY'S *Chronicle of the Cid.*

Note 7, page 117, line 23.

Alvar Fañez Minaya, one of the Cid's most distinguished warriors.

Note 8, page 118, line 1.

The Archer Queen.

A Moorish Amazon, who, with a band of female warriors, accompanied King Bucar from Africa. Her arrows were so unerring, that she obtained the name of the Star of Archers.

Una Mora muy gallarda,
Gran maestra en el tirar,
Con Saetas del Aljava,
De los arcos de Turquia
Estrella era nombrada,
Por la destreza que avia
En el herir de la Xára.

Note 9, page 119, line 9.

See SOUTHEY'S *Chronicle of the Cid*, p. 352.

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ON A FLOWER FROM THE FIELD OF GRÜTLI.

WHENCE art thou, flower? From holy ground,
Where freedom's foot hath been!
Yet bugle-blast or trumpet-sound
Ne'er shook that solemn scene.

Flower of a noble field! thy birth
Was not where spears have cross'd,
And shiver'd helms have strewn the earth,
Midst banners won and lost.

But where the sunny hues and showers
Unto thy cup were given,
There met high hearts at midnight hours,
Pure hands were raised to heaven;

And vows were pledged that man should roam
Through every Alpine dell
Free as the wind, the torrent's foam,
The shaft of William Tell.

And prayer, the full deep flow of prayer,
Hallow'd the pastoral sod;
And souls grew strong for battle there,
Nerved with the peace of God.

Before the Alps and stars they knelt,
That calm devoted band,
And rose, and made their spirits felt
Through all the mountain-land.

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Then welcome Grütli's free-born flower!
Even in thy pale decay
There dwells a breath, a tone, a power,
Which all high thoughts obey.

ON A LEAF FROM THE TOMB OF VIRGIL.

And was thy home, pale wither'd thing,
Beneath the rich blue southern sky?
Wert thou a nursling of the spring,
The winds and suns of glorious Italy?

Those suns in golden light e'en now,
Look o'er the poet's lovely grave;
Those winds are breathing soft, but thou
Answering their whisper, there no more shalt wave.

The flowers o'er Posilippo's brow
May cluster in their purple bloom,
But on th' o'ershadowing ilex-bough,
Thy breezy place is void by Virgil's tomb.

Thy place is void; oh! none on earth,
This crowded earth, may so remain,
Save that which souls of loftiest birth
Leave when they part, their brighter home to gain.

Another leaf, ere now, hath sprung
On the green stem which once was thine;
When shall another strain be sung
Like his whose dust hath made that spot a shrine?

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THE CHIEFTAIN'S SON.

Yes, it is ours!—the field is won,
A dark and evil field!
Lift from the ground my noble son,
And bear him homewards on his bloody shield.

Let me not hear your trumpets ring,
Swell not the battle-horn!
Thoughts far too sad those notes will bring,
When to the grave my glorious flower is borne!

Speak not of victory!—in the name
There is too much of woe!
Hush'd be the empty voice of Fame—
Call me back *his* whose graceful head is low.

Speak not of victory!—from my halls
The sunny hour is gone!
The ancient banner on my walls,
Must sink ere long; I had but him—but one!

Within the dwelling of my sires
The hearths will soon be cold,
With me must die the beacon-fires
That stream'd at midnight from the mountain-hold.

And let them fade, since this must be,
My lovely and my brave!
Was thy bright blood pour'd forth for me?
And is there but for stately youth a grave?

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Speak to me once again, my boy!
Wilt thou not hear my call?
Thou wert so full of life and joy,
I had not dreamt of *this*—that thou couldst fall!

Thy mother watches from the steep
For thy returning plume;
How shall I tell her that thy sleep
Is of the silent house, th' untimely tomb?

Thou didst not seem as one to die,
With all thy young renown!
—Ye saw his falchion's flash on high,
In the mid-fight, when spears and crests went down!

Slow be your march! the field is won!
A dark and evil field!
Lift from the ground my noble son,
And bear him homewards on his bloody shield.

A FRAGMENT.

Rest on your battle-fields, ye brave!
Let the pines murmur o'er your grave,
Your dirge be in the moaning wave—
We call you back no more!

Oh! there was mourning when ye fell,
In your own vales a deep-toned knell,
An agony, a wild farewell—
But that hath long been o'er.

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Rest with your still and solemn fame;
The hills keep record of your name,
And never can a touch of shame
Darken the buried brow.

But we on changeful days are cast,
When bright names from their place fall fast;
And ye that with your glory pass'd,
We cannot mourn you now.

ENGLAND'S DEAD.

Son of the Ocean Isle!
Where sleep your mighty dead?
Show me what high and stately pile
Is rear'd o'er Glory's bed.

Go, stranger! track the deep—
Free, free the white sail spread!
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

On Egypt's burning plains,
By the pyramid o'ersway'd,
With fearful power the noonday reigns,
And the palm-trees yield no shade;—

But let the angry sun
From heaven look fiercely red,

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Unfelt by those whose task is done !—
There slumber England's dead.

The hurricane hath might
Along the Indian shore,
And far by Ganges' banks at night
Is heard the tiger's roar ;—

But let the sound roll on !
It hath no tone of dread
For those that from their toils are gone,—
There slumber England's dead.

Loud rush the torrent-floods
The Western wilds among,
And free, in green Columbia's woods,
The hunter's bow is strung;—

But let the floods rush on !
Let the arrow's flight be sped !
Why should *they* reck whose task is done ?—
There slumber England's dead !

The mountain-storms rise high
In the snowy Pyrenees,
And toss the pine-boughs through the sky
Like rose-leaves on the breeze ;—

But let the storm rage on !
Let the fresh wreaths be shed !
For the Roncesvalles' field is won,—
There slumber England's dead.

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On the frozen deep's repose
'Tis a dark and dreadful hour,
When round the ship the ice-fields close,
And the northern night-clouds lower ;—

But let the ice drift on !
Let the cold-blue desert spread !
Their course with mast and flag is done—
Even there sleep England's dead.

The warlike of the isles,
The men of field and wave !
Are not the rocks their funeral piles,
The seas and shores their grave ?

Go, stranger ! track the deep—
Free, free the white sail spread !
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

THE MEETING OF THE BARDS.

WRITTEN FOR AN EISTEDDVOD, OR MEETING OF WELSH BARDS, HELD IN LONDON, MAY 22, 1822.

[The *Gorseddau*, or meetings of the British bards, were anciently ordained to be held in the open air, on some conspicuous situation, whilst the sun was above the horizon ; or, according to the expression employed on these occasions, " in the face of the sun, and in the eye of light." The places set apart for this purpose were marked out by a circle of stones, called the circle of federation. The presiding bard stood on a large stone

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(Maen Gorsedd, or the stone of assembly) in the centre. The sheathing of a sword upon this stone was the ceremony which announced the opening of a *Gorsedd*, or meeting. The bards always stood in their uni-coloured robes, with their heads and feet uncovered, within the circle of federation. — See OWEN'S *Translation of the Heroic Elegies of Llywarch Hen.*]

WHERE met our bards of old ?—the glorious throng,
They of the mountain and the battle song ?
They met—oh ! not in kingly hall or bower,
But where wild nature girt herself with power:
They met where streams flash'd bright from rocky caves ;
They met where woods made moan o'er warrior's graves,
And where the torrent's rainbow spray was cast,
And where dark lakes were heaving to the blast,
And midst the eternal cliffs, whose strength defied
The crested Roman, in his hour of pride ;
And where the Carnedd,* on its lonely hill,
Bore silent record of the mighty still ;
And where the Druid's ancient Cromlech † frown'd,
And the oaks breathed mysterious murmurs round.

There throng'd th' inspired of yore !—on plain or height,
In the sun's face, beneath the eye of light !
And, baring unto heaven each noble head,
Stood in the circle, where none else might tread.

* Carnedd, a stone-barrow, or cairn.

† Cromlech, a Druidical monument or altar. The word means a stone of covenant.

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Well might their lays be lofty!—soaring thought
From Nature's presence tenfold grandeur caught:
Well might bold freedom's soul pervade the strains
Which startled eagles from their lone domains,
And, like a breeze in chainless triumph, went
Up through the blue resounding firmament.
Whence came the echoes to those numbers high?
'Twas from the battle-fields of days gone by,
And from the tombs of heroes, laid to rest
With their good swords, upon the mountain's breast;
And from the watch-towers on the heights of snow,
Sever'd by cloud and storm from all below;
And the turf-mounds,* once girt by ruddy spears,
And the rock-altars of departed years.
—Thence, deeply mingling with the torrent's roar,
The winds a thousand wild responses bore;
And the green land, whose every vale and glen
Doth shrine the memory of heroic men,
On all her hills awakening to rejoice,
Sent forth proud answers to her children's voice.

For us, not ours the festival to hold,
Midst the stone circles, hallow'd thus of old;
Not where great Nature's majesty and might
First broke all-glorious on our infant sight;
Not near the tombs, where sleep our free and brave,
Not by the mountain-llyn,† the ocean-wave,
In these late days we meet—dark Mona's shore,
Eryri's‡ cliffs resound with harps no more!

* The ancient British chiefs frequently harangued their followers from small artificial mounts of turf.—*Pennant.*

† Llyn, a lake or pool.

‡ *Eryri*, Snowdon.

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But as the stream (though time or art may turn
The current, bursting from its cavern'd urn,
From Alpine glens, or ancient forest bowers,
To bathe soft vales of pasture and of flowers),
Alike in rushing strength or sunny sleep,
Holds on its course, to mingle with the deep ;
Thus, though our paths be changed, still warm and free,
Land of the bard ! our spirit flies to thee !
To thee our thoughts, our hopes, our hearts belong,
Our dreams are haunted by thy voice of song !
Nor yield our souls one patriot-feeling less
To the green memory of thy loveliness,
Than theirs, whose harp-notes peal'd from every height,
In the sun's face beneath the eye of light !

THE VOICE OF SPRING.*

I COME, I come ! ye have call'd me long—
I come o'er the mountains with light and song !
Ye may trace my step o'er the wakening earth,
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose-stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass.

* Originally published in the *New Monthly Magazine.*

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I have breathed on the South, and the chestnut flowers
By thousands have burst from the forest-bowers,
And the ancient graves and the fallen fanes
Are veil'd with wreaths on Italian plains ;—
But it is not for me, in my hour of bloom,
To speak of the ruin or the tomb !

I have look'd on the hills of the stormy North,
And the larch has hung all his tassels forth,
The fisher is out on the sunny sea,
And the reindeer bounds o'er the pastures free,
And the pine has a fringe of softer green,
And the moss looks bright where my foot hath been.

I have sent through the wood-paths a glowing sigh,
And call'd out each voice of the deep-blue sky ;
From the night-bird's lay through the starry time,
In the groves of the soft Hesperian clime,
To the swan's wild note by the Iceland lakes,
When the dark fir-branch into verdure breaks.

From the streams and founts I have loosed the chain,
They are sweeping on to the silvery main,
They are flashing down from the mountain brows,
They are flinging spray o'er the forest boughs,
They are bursting fresh from their sparry caves,
And the earth resounds with the joy of waves !

Come forth, O ye children of gladness ! come !
Where the violets lie may be now your home.
Ye of the rose-lip and dew-bright eye,
And the bounding footstep, to meet me fly !

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With the lyre, and the wreath, and the joyous lay,
Come forth to the sunshine—I may not stay.

Away from the dwellings of care-worn men,
The waters are sparkling in grove and glen!
Away from the chamber and sullen hearth,
The young leaves are dancing in breezy mirth!
Their light stems thrill to the wild-wood strains,
And youth is abroad in my green domains.

But ye!—ye are changed since ye met me last!
There is something bright from your features pass'd!
There is that come over your brow and eye
Which speaks of a world where the flowers must die!
—Ye smile! but your smile hath a dimness yet:
Oh! what have you look'd on since last we met?

Ye are changed, ye are changed!—and I see not here
All whom I saw in the vanish'd year!
There were graceful heads, with their ringlets bright,
Which toss'd in the breeze with a play of light;
There were eyes in whose glistening laughter lay
No faint remembrance of dull decay!

There were steps that flew o'er the cowslip's head,
As if for a banquet all earth were spread;
There were voices that rang through the sapphire sky,
And had not a sound of mortality!
Are they gone? is their mirth from the mountains pass'd?—
Ye have look'd on death since ye met me last!

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I know whence the shadow comes o'er you now—
Ye have strewn the dust on the sunny brow!
Ye have given the lovely to earth's embrace—
She hath taken the fairest of beauty's race,
With their laughing eyes and their festal crown:
They are gone from amongst you in silence down!

They are gone from amongst you, the young and fair,
Ye have lost the gleam of their shining hair!
But I know of a land where there falls no blight—
I shall find them there, with their eyes of light!
Where Death midst the blooms of the morn may dwell,
I tarry no longer—farewell, farewell!

The summer is coming, on soft winds borne—
Ye may press the grape, ye may bind the corn!
For me, I depart to a brighter shore—
Ye are mark'd by care, ye are mine no more;
I go where the loved who have left you dwell,
And the flowers are not Death's—fare ye well, farewell!

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RECORDS OF WOMAN.

ARABELLA STUART.

["THE LADY ARABELLA," as she has been frequently entitled, was descended from Margaret, eldest daughter of Henry VII., and consequently allied by birth to Elizabeth as well as James I. This affinity to the throne proved the misfortune of her life, as the jealousies which it constantly excited in her royal relatives, who were anxious to prevent her marrying, shut her out from the enjoyment of that domestic happiness which her heart appears to have so fervently desired. By a secret but early-discovered union with William Seymour, son of Lord Beauchamp, she alarmed the cabinet of James, and the wedded lovers were immediately placed in separate confinement. From this they found means to concert a romantic plan of escape; and having won over a female attendant, by whose assistance she was disguised in male attire, Arabella, though faint from recent sickness and suffering, stole out in the night, and at last reached an appointed spot, where a boat and servants were in waiting. She embarked; and at break of day a French vessel engaged to receive her was discovered and gained. As Seymour, however, had not yet arrived, she was desirous that the vessel should lie at anchor for him; but this wish was overruled by her companions, who, contrary to her entreaties, hoisted sail, "which," says D'Israeli, "occasioned so fatal a termination to this romantic adventure. Seymour, indeed, had escaped from the Tower; he reached the wharf, and found his confidential man waiting with a boat, and arrived

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at Lee. The time passed; the waves were rising; Arabella was not there; but in the distance he descried a vessel. Hiring a fisherman to take him on board, he discovered, to his grief, on hailing it, that it was not the French ship charged with his Arabella; in despair and confusion he found another ship from Newcastle, which for a large sum altered its course, and landed him in Flanders." Arabella, meantime, whilst imploring her attendants to linger, and earnestly looking out for the expected boat of her husband, was overtaken in Calais Roads by a vessel in the king's service, and brought back to a captivity, under the suffering of which her mind and constitution gradually sank. "What passed in that dreadful imprisonment cannot perhaps be recovered for authentic history, but enough is known—that her mind grew impaired, that she finally lost her reason, and, if the duration of her imprisonment was short, that it was only terminated by her death. Some effusions, often begun and never ended, written and erased, incoherent and rational, yet remain among her papers."—*D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature.*

The following poem, meant as some record of her fate, and the imagined fluctuations of her thoughts and feelings, is supposed to commence during the time of her first imprisonment, whilst her mind was yet buoyed up by the consciousness of Seymour's affection, and the cherished hope of eventual deliverance.]

"And is not love in vain
Torture enough without a living tomb?"
BYRON.

"Fermossi al fin il cor che balzò tanto."
PINDEMONTE.

I.

'TWAS but a dream! I saw the stag leap free,
Under the boughs where early birds were singing;

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I stood o'ershadow'd by the greenwood tree,
And heard, it seem'd, a sudden bugle ringing
Far through a royal forest. Then the fawn
Shot, like a gleam of light, from grassy lawn
To secret covert; and the smooth turf shook,
And lilies quiver'd by the glade's lone brook,
And young leaves trembled, as, in fleet career,
A princely band, with horn, and hound, and spear,
Like a rich masque swept forth. I saw the dance
Of their white plumes, that bore a silvery glance
Into the deep wood's heart; and all pass'd by
Save one—I met the smile of *one* clear eye,
Flashing out joy to mine. Yes, *thou* wert there,
Seymour! A soft wind blew the clustering hair
Back from thy gallant brow, as thou didst rein
Thy courser, turning from that gorgeous train,
And fling, methought, thy hunting spear away,
And, lightly graceful in thy green array,
Bound to my side. And we, that met and parted
Ever in dread of some dark watchful power,
Won back to childhood's trust, and fearless-hearted,
Blent the glad fulness of our thoughts that hour
Even like the mingling of sweet streams, beneath
Dim woven leaves, and midst the floating breath
Of hidden forest-flowers.

II.

'Tis past! I wake,
A captive, and alone, and far from thee,
My love and friend! Yet fostering, for thy sake,
A quenchless hope of happiness to be;
And feeling still my woman-spirit strong,

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In the deep faith which lifts from earthly wrong
A heavenward glance. I know, I know our love
Shall yet call gentle angels from above,
By its undying fervour, and prevail—
Sending a breath, as of the spring's first gale,
Through hearts now cold; and, raising its bright face,
With a free gush of sunny tears, erase
The characters of anguish. In this trust,
I bear, I strive, I bow not to the dust,
That I may bring thee back no faded form,
No bosom chill'd and blighted by the storm,
But all my youth's first treasures, when we meet,
Making past sorrow, by communion, sweet.

III.

And thou too art in bonds! Yet droop thou not,
O my beloved! there is *one* hopeless lot,
But one, and that not ours. Beside the dead
There sits the grief that mantles up its head,
Loathing the laughter and proud pomp of light,
When darkness, from the vainly doting sight
Covers its beautiful![1] If thou wert gone
To the grave's bosom, with thy radiant brow—
If thy deep-thrilling voice, with that low tone
Of earnest tenderness, which now, even now
Seems floating through my soul, were music taken
For ever from this world—oh! thus forsaken
Could I bear on? Thou livest, thou livest, thou'rt mine!
With this glad thought I make my heart a shrine,
And by the lamp which quenchless there shall burn
Sit a lone watcher for the day's return.

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IV.

And lo! the joy that cometh with the morning,
Brightly victorious o'er the hours of care!
I have not watch'd in vain, serenely scorning
The wild and busy whispers of despair!
Thou hast sent tidings, as of heaven—I wait
The hour, the sign, for blessèd flight to thee.
Oh! for the skylark's wing that seeks its mate
As a star shoots!—but on the breezy sea
We shall meet soon. To think of such an hour!
Will not my heart, o'erburden'd by its bliss,
Faint and give way within me, as a flower
Borne down and perishing by noontide's kiss?
Yet shall I *fear* that lot—the perfect rest,
The full deep joy of dying on thy breast,
After long suffering won? So rich a close
Too seldom crowns with peace affection's woes.

V.

Sunset! I tell each moment. From the skies
The last red splendour floats along my wall,
Like a king's banner! Now it melts, it dies!
I see one star—I hear—'twas not the call,
Th' expected voice; my quick heart throbb'd too soon.
I must keep vigil till yon rising moon
Shower down less golden light. Beneath her beam
Through my lone lattice pour'd, I sit and dream
Of summer-lands afar, where holy love,
Under the vine or in the citron grove,
May breathe from terror.

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Now the night grows deep,
And silent as its clouds, and full of sleep.
I hear my veins beat. Hark! a bell's slow chime!
My heart strikes with it. Yet again—'tis time!
A step!—a voice!—or but a rising breeze?
Hark!—haste!—I come, to meet thee on the seas!

* * * * *

VI.

Now never more, oh! never, in the worth
Of its pure cause, let sorrowing love on earth
Trust fondly—never more! The hope is crush'd
That lit my life, the voice within me hush'd
That spoke sweet oracles; and I return
To lay my youth, as in a burial urn,
Where sunshine may not find it. All is lost!
No tempest met our barks—no billow toss'd;
Yet were they sever'd, even as we must be,
That so have loved, so striven our hearts to free
From their close-coiling fate! In vain—in vain!
The dark links meet, and clasp themselves again,
And press out life. Upon the deck I stood,
And a white sail came gliding o'er the flood,
Like some proud bird of ocean; then mine eye
Strain'd out, one moment earlier to descry
The form it ached for, and the bark's career
Seem'd slow to that fond yearning: it drew near
Fraught with our foes! What boots it to recall
The strife, the tears? Once more a prison wall
Shuts the green hills and woodlands from my sight,
And joyous glance of waters to the light,
And thee, my Seymour!—thee!

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I will not sink!
Thou, *thou* hast rent the heavy chain that bound thee!
And this shall be my strength—the joy to think
That thou may'st wander with heaven's breath around thee,
And all the laughing sky! This thought shall yet
Shine o'er my heart a radiant amulet,
Guarding it from despair. Thy bonds are broken;
And unto me, I know, thy true love's token
Shall one day be deliverance, though the years
Lie dim between, o'erhung with mists of tears.

VII.

My friend! my friend! where art thou? Day by day,
Gliding like some dark mournful stream away,
My silent youth flows from me. Spring, the while,
Comes and rains beauty on the kindling boughs
Round hall and hamlet; summer with her smile
Fills the green forest; young hearts breathe their vows;
Brothers long parted meet; fair children rise
Round the glad board; hope laughs from loving eyes:
All this is in the world!—These joys lie sown,
The dew of every path! On *one* alone
Their freshness may not fall—the stricken deer
Dying of thirst with all the waters near.

VIII.

Ye are from dingle and fresh glade, ye flowers!
By some kind hand to cheer my dungeon sent;

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O'er you the oak shed down the summer showers,
And the lark's nest was where your bright cups bent,
Quivering to breeze and raindrop, like the sheen
Of twilight stars. On you heaven's eye hath been,
Through the leaves pouring its dark sultry blue
Into your glowing hearts; the bee to you
Hath murmur'd, and the rill. My soul grows faint
With passionate yearning, as its quick dreams paint
Your haunts by dell and stream—the green, the free,
The full of all sweet sound—the shut from me!

IX.

There went a swift bird singing past my cell——
O Love and Freedom! ye are lovely things!
With you the peasant on the hills may dwell,
And by the streams. But I—the blood of kings,
A proud unmingling river, through my veins
Flows in lone brightness, and its gifts are chains!
Kings!—I had silent visions of deep bliss,
Leaving their thrones far distant; and for this
I am cast under their triumphal car,
An insect to be crush'd! Oh! Heaven is far—
Earth pitiless!

Dost thou forget me, Seymour? I am proved
So long, so sternly! Seymour, my beloved!
There are such tales of holy marvels done
By strong affection, of deliverance won
Through its prevailing power! Are these things told
Till the young weep with rapture, and the old
Wonder, yet dare not doubt; and thou! oh, thou!

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Dost thou forget me in my hope's decay?—
Thou canst not! Through the silent night, even now,
I, that need prayer so much, awake and pray
Still first for thee. O gentle, gentle friend!
How shall I bear this anguish to the end?

Aid!—comes there yet no aid? The voice of blood
Passes heaven's gate, even ere the crimson flood
Sinks through the greensward! Is there not a cry
From the wrung heart, of power, through agony,
To pierce the clouds? Hear, Mercy!—hear me!
None
That bleed and weep beneath the smiling sun
Have heavier cause! Yet hear!—my soul grows
dark!——
Who hears the last shriek from the sinking bark
On the mid seas, and with the storm alone,
And bearing to the abyss, unseen, unknown,
Its freight of human hearts? Th' o'ermastering wave!
Who shall tell how it rush'd—and none to save!

Thou hast forsaken me! I feel, I know,
There would be rescue if this were not so.
Thou'rt at the chase, thou'rt at the festive board,
Thou'rt where the red wine free and high is pour'd,
Thou'rt where the dancers meet! A magic glass
Is set within my soul, and proud shapes pass,
Flushing it o'er with pomp from bower and hall:
I see one shadow, stateliest there of all—

Thine! What dost *thou* amidst the bright and fair,
Whispering light words, and mocking my despair?

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It is not well of thee! My love was more
Than fiery song may breathe, deep thought explore;
And there thou smilest, while my heart is dying,
With all its blighted hopes around it lying:
Even thou, on whom they hung their last green leaf——
Yet smile, smile on! too bright art thou for grief!

Death! What! is death a lock'd and treasured thing,
Guarded by swords of fire?[2] a hidden spring,
A fabled fruit, that I should thus endure,
As if the world within me held no cure?
Wherefore not spread free wings——Heaven, heaven control
These thoughts!—they rush—I look into my soul
As down a gulf, and tremble at the array
Of fierce forms crowding it! Give strength to pray!
So shall their dark host pass.

The storm is still'd.
Father in Heaven! thou, only thou, canst sound
The heart's great deep, with floods of anguish fill'd,
For human line too fearfully profound.
Therefore, forgive, my Father! if thy child,
Rock'd on its heaving darkness, hath grown wild
And sinn'd in her despair! It well may be
That thou wouldst lead my spirit back to thee,
By the crush'd hope too long on this world pour'd—
The stricken love which hath perchance adored
A mortal in thy place! Now let me strive
With thy strong arm no more! Forgive, forgive!
Take me to peace!

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And peace at last is nigh.
A sign is on my brow, a token sent
Th' o'erwearied dust from home: no breeze flits by,
But calls me with a strange sweet whisper, blent
Of many mysteries.

Hark! the warning tone
Deepens—its word is *Death!* Alone, alone,
And sad in youth, but chasten'd, I depart,
Bowing to heaven. Yet, yet my woman's heart
Shall wake a spirit and a power to bless,
Even in this hour's o'ershadowing fearfulness,
Thee, its first love! O tender still, and true!
Be it forgotten if mine anguish threw
Drops from its bitter fountain on thy name,
Though but a moment!

Now, with fainting frame,
With soul just lingering on the flight begun,
To bind for thee its last dim thoughts in one,
I bless thee! Peace be on thy noble head,
Years of bright fame, when I am with the dead!
I bid this prayer survive me, and retain
Its might, again to bless thee, and again!
Thou hast been gather'd into my dark fate
Too much; too long, for my sake, desolate
Hath been thine exiled youth: but now take back,
From dying hands, thy freedom, and re-track
(After a few kind tears for her whose days
Went out in dreams of thee) the sunny ways
Of hope, and find thou happiness! Yet send
Even then, in silent hours, a thought, dear friend!

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Down to my voiceless chamber; for thy love
Hath been to me all gifts of earth above,
Though bought with burning tears! It is the sting
Of death to leave that vainly-precious thing
In this cold world! What were it, then, if thou,
With thy fond eyes, wert gazing on me now?
Too keen a pang! Farewell! and yet once more,
Farewell! The passion of long years I pour
Into that word! Thou hear'st not—but the woe
And fervour of its tones may one day flow
To thy heart's holy place: there let them dwell.
We shall o'ersweep the grave to meet. Farewell!

THE BRIDE OF THE GREEK ISLE.*

"Fear! I'm a Greek, and how should I fear death?
A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom?
* * * * *
I will not live degraded."

Sardanapalus.

Come from the woods with the citron-flowers,
Come with your lyres for the festal hours,
Maids of bright Scio! They came, and the breeze
Bore their sweet songs o'er the Grecian seas;
They came, and Eudora stood robed and crown'd,
The bride of the morn, with her train around.
Jewels flash'd out from her braided hair,
Like starry dews midst the roses there;

* Founded on a circumstance related in the second series of the *Curiosities of Literature*, and forming part of a picture in the "Painted Biography" there described.

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Pearls on her bosom quivering shone,
Heaved by her heart through its golden zone.
But a brow, as those gems of the ocean pale,
Gleam'd from beneath her transparent veil;
Changeful and faint was her fair cheek's hue,
Though clear as a flower which the light looks through;
And the glance of her dark resplendent eye,
For the aspect of woman at times too high,
Lay floating in mists, which the troubled stream
Of the soul sent up o'er its fervid beam.

She look'd on the vine at her father's door,
Like one that is leaving his native shore;
She hung o'er the myrtle once call'd her own,
As it greenly waved by the threshold stone;
She turn'd—and her mother's gaze brought back
Each hue of her childhood's faded track.
Oh! hush the song, and let her tears
Flow to the dream of her early years!
Holy and pure are the drops that fall
When the young bride goes from her father's hall;
She goes unto love yet untried and new,
She parts from love which hath still been true:
Mute be the song and the choral strain,
Till her heart's deep well-spring is clear again!
She wept on her mother's faithful breast,
Like a babe that sobs itself to rest;
She wept—yet laid her hand awhile
In *his* that waited her dawning smile—
Her soul's affianced, nor cherish'd less
For the gush of nature's tenderness!

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She lifted her graceful head at last—
The choking swell of her heart was past;
And her lovely thoughts from their cells found way
In the sudden flow of a plaintive lay.[3]

THE BRIDE'S FAREWELL.

WHY do I weep? To leave the vine
Whose clusters o'er me bend;
The myrtle—yet, oh call it mine!—
The flowers I loved to tend.
A thousand thoughts of all things dear
Like shadows o'er me sweep;
I leave my sunny childhood here,
Oh! therefore let me weep!

I leave thee, sister! we have play'd
Through many a joyous hour,
Where the silvery green of the olive shade
Hung dim o'er fount and bower.
Yes! thou and I, by stream, by shore,
In song, in prayer, in sleep,
Have been as we may be no more—
Kind sister, let me weep!

I leave thee, father! Eve's bright moon
Must now light other feet,
With the gather'd grapes, and the lyre in tune,
Thy homeward step to greet.
Thou in whose voice, to bless thy child,
Lay tones of love so deep,

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Whose eye o'er all my youth hath smiled—
I leave thee! let me weep!

Mother! I leave thee! on thy breast
Pouring out joy and woe,
I have found that holy place of rest
Still changeless—yet I go!
Lips, that have lull'd me with your strain!
Eyes, that have watch'd my sleep!
Will earth give love like *yours* again?—
Sweet mother! let me weep!

And like a slight young tree, that throws
The weight of rain from its drooping boughs,
Once more she wept. But a changeful thing
Is the human heart—as a mountain spring
That works its way, through the torrent's foam,
To the bright pool near it, the lily's home!
It is well!—The cloud on her soul that lay,
Hath melted in glittering drops away.
Wake again, mingle, sweet flute and lyre!
She turns to her lover, she leaves her sire.
Mother! on earth it must still be so:
Thou rearest the lovely to see them go!

They are moving onward, the bridal throng,
Ye may track their way by the swells of song;
Ye may catch through the foliage their white robes' gleam,
Like a swan midst the reeds of a shadowy stream;
Their arms bear up garlands, their gliding tread
Is over the deep-vein'd violet's bed;

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They have light leaves around them, blue skies above,
An arch for the triumph of youth and love!

II.

Still and sweet was the home that stood
In the flowering depths of a Grecian wood,
With the soft green light o'er its low roof spread,
As if from the glow of an emerald shed,
Pouring through lime-leaves that mingled on high,
Asleep in the silence of noon's clear sky.
Citrons amidst their dark foliage glow'd,
Making a gleam round the lone abode;
Laurels o'erhung it, whose faintest shiver
Scatter'd out rays like a glancing river;
Stars of the jasmine its pillars crown'd,
Vine-stalks its lattice and walls had bound;
And brightly before it a fountain's play
Flung showers through a thicket of glossy bay,
To a cypress which rose in that flashing rain,
Like one tall shaft of some fallen fane.

And thither Ianthis had brought his bride,
And the guests were met by that fountain side.
They lifted the veil from Eudora's face—
It smiled out softly in pensive grace,
With lips of love, and a brow serene,
Meet for the soul of the deep wood-scene.
Bring wine, bring odours!—the board is spread;
Bring roses! a chaplet for every head!
The wine-cups foam'd, and the rose was shower'd
On the young and fair from the world embower'd;

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The sun look'd not on them in that sweet shade,
The winds amid scented boughs were laid ;
And there came by fits, through some wavy tree,
A sound and a gleam of the moaning sea.

Hush ! be still ! Was that no more
Than the murmur from the shore ?
Silence !—did thick rain-drops beat
On the grass like trampling feet ?
Fling down the goblet, and draw the sword !
The groves are fill'd with a pirate horde !
Through the dim olives their sabres shine !—
Now must the red blood stream for wine !

The youths from the banquet to battle sprang,
The woods with the shriek of the maidens rang ;
Under the golden-fruited boughs
There were flashing poniards and dark'ning brows—
Footsteps, o'er garland and lyre that fled,
And the dying soon on a greensward bed.
—Eudora, Eudora ! *thou* dost not fly !—
She saw but Ianthis before her lie,
With the blood from his breast in a gushing flow,
Like a child's large tears in its hour of woe,
And a gathering film in his lifted eye,
That sought his young bride out mournfully.
She knelt down beside him—her arms she wound
Like tendrils, his drooping neck around,
As if the passion of that fond grasp
Might chain in life with its ivy-clasp.
But they tore her thence in her wild despair,
The sea's fierce rovers—they left him there :

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They left to the fountain a dark-red vein,
And on the wet violets a pile of slain,
And a hush of fear through the summer grove.—
So closed the triumph of youth and love!

III.

Gloomy lay the shore that night,
When the moon, with sleeping light,
Bathed each purple Sciote hill—
Gloomy lay the shore, and still.
O'er the wave no gay guitar
Sent its floating music far;
No glad sound of dancing feet
Woke the starry hours to greet.
But a voice of mortal woe,
In its changes wild or low,
Through the midnight's blue repose,
From the sea-beat rocks arose,
As Eudora's mother stood
Gazing o'er th' Ægean flood,
With a fix'd and straining eye—
Oh! was the spoiler's vessel nigh?
Yes? there, becalm'd in silent sleep,
Dark and alone on a breathless deep,
On a sea of molten silver, dark
Brooding it frown'd, that evil bark!
There its broad pennon a shadow cast,
Moveless and black from the tall still mast;
And the heavy sound of its flapping sail
Idly and vainly woo'd the gale.
Hush'd was all else—had ocean's breast
Rock'd e'en Eudora that hour to rest?

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To rest? the waves tremble!—what piercing cry
Bursts from the heart of the ship on high?
What light through the heavens, in a sudden spire,
Shoots from the deck up? Fire! 'tis fire!
There are wild forms hurrying to and fro,
Seen darkly clear on that lurid glow;
There are shout, and signal-gun, and call,
And the dashing of water—but fruitless all!
Man may not fetter, nor ocean tame
The might and wrath of the rushing flame!
It hath twined the mast like a glittering snake,
That coils up a tree from a dusky brake;
It hath touch'd the sails, and their canvass rolls
Away from its breath into shrivell'd scrolls;
It hath taken the flag's high place in the air,
And redden'd the stars with its wavy glare;
And sent out bright arrows, and soar'd in glee,
To a burning mount midst the moonlight sea.
The swimmers are plunging from stern and prow—
Eudora! Eudora! where, where art thou?
The slave and his master alike are gone.—
Mother! who stands on the deck alone?
The child of thy bosom!—and lo! a brand
Blazing up high in her lifted hand!
And her veil flung back, and her free dark hair
Sway'd by the flames as they rock and flare;
And her fragile form to its loftiest height
Dilated, as if by the spirit's might;
And her eye with an eagle-gladness fraught——
Oh! could this work be of woman wrought?
Yes! 'twas her deed!—by that haughty smile,
It was hers: she hath kindled her funeral pile!

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Never might shame on that bright head be,
Her blood was the Greek's, and hath made her free!

Proudly she stands, like an Indian bride,
On the pyre with the holy dead beside;
But a shriek from her mother hath caught her ear,
As the flames to her marriage robe draw near,
And starting, she spreads her pale arms in vain
To the form they must never infold again.
—One moment more, and her hands are clasp'd—
Fallen is the torch they had wildly grasp'd—
Her sinking knee unto Heaven is bow'd,
And her last look raised through the smoke's dim shroud,
And her lips as in prayer for her pardon move;—
Now the night gathers o'er youth and love!

THE SWITZER'S WIFE.

[Werner Stauffacher, one of the three confederates of the field of Grütli, had been alarmed by the envy with which the Austrian bailiff, Landenberg, had noticed the appearance of wealth and comfort which distinguished his dwelling. It was not, however, until roused by the entreaties of his wife, a woman who seems to have been of a heroic spirit, that he was induced to deliberate with his friends upon the measures by which Switzerland was finally delivered.]

"Nor look nor tone revealeth aught
Save woman's quietness of thought;
And yet around her is a light
Of inward majesty and might."

M. J. J.

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* * * * *

"Wer solch ein herz an sienen Busen drückt,
Der kann fur herd und hof mit freuden fechten."
WILLHELM TELL.

IT was the time when children bound to meet
Their father's homeward step from field or hill,
And when the herd's returning bells are sweet
In the Swiss valleys, and the lakes grow still,
And the last note of that wild horn swells by
Which haunts the exile's heart with melody.

And lovely smiled full many an Alpine home,
Touch'd with the crimson of the dying hour,
Which lit its low roof by the torrent's foam,
And pierced its lattice through the vine-hung bower;
But one, the loveliest o'er the land that rose,
Then first look'd mournful in its green repose.

For Werner sat beneath the linden tree,
That sent its lulling whispers through his door,
Even as man sits, whose heart alone would be
With some deep care, and thus can find no more
Th' accustom'd joy in all which evening brings,
Gathering a household with her quiet wings.

His wife stood hush'd before him—sad, yet mild
In her beseeching mien!—he mark'd it not.
The silvery laughter of his bright-hair'd child
Rang from the greensward round the shelter'd spot,
But seem'd unheard; until at last the boy
Raised from his heap'd-up flowers a glance of joy,

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And met his father's face. But then a change
Pass'd swiftly o'er the brow of infant glee,
And a quick sense of something dimly strange
Brought him from play to stand beside the knee
So often climb'd, and lift his loving eyes
That shone through clouds of sorrowful surprise.

Then the proud bosom of the strong man shook;
But tenderly his babe's fair mother laid
Her hand on his, and with a pleading look,
Through tears half-quivering, o'er him bent and said,
"What grief, dear friend, hath made thy heart its prey—
That thou shouldst turn thee from our love away?

"It is too sad to see thee thus, my friend!
Mark'st thou the wonder on thy boy's fair brow,
Missing the smile from thine? Oh, cheer thee! bend
To his soft arms: unseal thy thoughts e'en now!
Thou dost not kindly to withhold the share
Of tried affection in thy secret care."

He look'd up into that sweet earnest face,
But sternly, mournfully: not yet the band
Was loosen'd from his soul; its inmost place
Not yet unveil'd by love's o'ermastering hand.
"Speak low!" he cried, and pointed where on high
The white Alps glitter'd through the solemn sky:

"We must speak low amidst our ancient hills
And their free torrents; for the days are come

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When tyranny lies couch'd by forest rills,
And meets the shepherd in his mountain-home.
Go, pour the wine of our own grapes in fear—
Keep silence by the hearth! its foes are near.

"The envy of th' oppressor's eye hath been
Upon my heritage. I sit to-night
Under my household tree, if not serene,
Yet with the faces best beloved in sight:
To-morrow eve may find me chain'd, and thee—
How can I bear the boy's young smiles to see?"

The bright blood left that youthful mother's cheek;
Back on the linden stem she lean'd her form;
And her lip trembled as it strove to speak,
Like a frail harp-string shaken by the storm.
'Twas but a moment, and the faintness pass'd,
And the free Alpine spirit woke at last.

And she, that ever through her home had moved
With the meek thoughtfulness and quiet smile
Of woman, calmly loving and beloved,
And timid in her happiness the while,
Stood brightly forth, and steadfastly, that hour—
Her clear glance kindling into sudden power.

Ay, pale she stood, but with an eye of light,
And took her fair child to her holy breast,
And lifted her soft voice, that gather'd might
As it found language:—"Are we thus oppress'd?
Then must we rise upon our mountain-sod,
And man must arm, and woman call on God!

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"I know what thou wouldst do;—and be it done!
Thy soul is darken'd with its fears for me.
Trust me to heaven, my husband! this, thy son,
The babe whom I have borne thee, must be free!
And the sweet memory of our pleasant hearth
May well give strength—if aught be strong on earth.

"Thou hast been brooding o'er the silent dread
Of my desponding tears; now lift once more,
My hunter of the hills! thy stately head,
And let thine eagle glance my joy restore!
I can bear all, but seeing *thee* subdued—
Take to thee back thine own undaunted mood.

"Go forth beside the waters, and along
The chamois paths, and through the forests go;
And tell, in burning words, thy tale of wrong
To the brave hearts that midst the hamlets glow.
God shall be with thee, my beloved! Away!
Bless but thy child, and leave me—I can pray!"

He sprang up, like a warrior youth awaking
To clarion sounds upon the ringing air;
He caught her to his breast, while proud tears breaking
From his dark eyes fell o'er her braided hair;
And "worthy art thou," was his joyous cry,
"That man for thee should gird himself to die!

"My bride, my wife, the mother of my child!
Now shall thy name be armour to my heart:
And this our land, by chains no more defiled,

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Be taught of thee to choose the better part!
I go—thy spirit on my words shall dwell:
Thy gentle voice shall stir the Alps. Farewell!"

And thus they parted, by the quiet lake,
In the clear starlight: he the strength to rouse
Of the free hills; she, thoughtful for his sake,
To rock her child beneath the whispering boughs,
Singing its blue half-curtain'd eyes to sleep
With a low hymn, amidst the stillness deep.

PROPERZIA ROSSI.

[Properzia Rossi, a celebrated female sculptor of Bologna, possessed also of talents for poetry and music, died in consequence of an unrequited attachment. A painting, by Ducis, represents her showing her last work, a basso-relievo of Ariadne, to a Roman knight, the object of her affection, who regards it with indifference.]

"Tell me no more, no more
Of my soul's lofty gifts! Are they not vain
To quench its haunting thirst for happiness?
Have I not loved, and striven, and fail'd to bind
One true heart unto me, whereon my own
Might find a resting-place, a home for all
Its burden of affections? I depart,
Unknown, though Fame goes with me; I must leave
The earth unknown. Yet it may be that death
Shall give my name a power to win such tears
As would have made life precious."

I.

ONE dream of passion and of beauty more!
And in its bright fulfilment let me pour
My soul away! Let earth retain a trace
Of that which lit my being, though its race

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Might have been loftier far. Yet one more dream!
From my deep spirit one victorious gleam
Ere I depart! For thee alone, for thee!
May this last work, this farewell triumph be—
Thou, loved so vainly! I would leave enshrined
Something immortal of my heart and mind,
That yet may speak to thee when I am gone,
Shaking thine inmost bosom with a tone
Of lost affection,—something that may prove
What she hath been, whose melancholy love
On thee was lavish'd; silent pang and tear,
And fervent song that gush'd when none were near,
And dream by night, and weary thought by day,
Stealing the brightness from her life away—
While thou——Awake! not yet within me die!
Under the burden and the agony
Of this vain tenderness—my spirit, wake!
Even for thy sorrowful affection's sake,
Live! in thy work breathe out!—that he may yet,
Feeling sad mastery there, perchance regret
Thine unrequited gift.

II.

It comes! the power
Within me born flows back—my fruitless dower
That could not win me love. Yet once again
I greet it proudly, with its rushing train
Of glorious images: they throng—they press—
A sudden joy lights up my loneliness—
I shall not perish all!
The bright work grows
Beneath my hand, unfolding, as a rose,

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Leaf after leaf, to beauty ; line by line,
I fix my thought, heart, soul, to burn, to shine,
Through the pale marble's veins. It grows !—and now
I give my own life's history to thy brow,
Forsaken Ariadne !—thou shalt wear
My form, my lineaments ; but oh ! more fair,
Touch'd into lovelier being by the glow
Which in me dwells, as by the summer light
All things are glorified. From thee my woe
Shall yet look beautiful to meet his sight,
When I am pass'd away. Thou art the mould,
Wherein I pour the fervent thoughts, th' untold,
The self-consuming ! Speak to him of me,
Thou, the deserted by the lonely sea,
With the soft sadness of thine earnest eye—
Speak to him, lorn one! deeply, mournfully,
Of all my love and grief ! Oh ! could I throw
Into thy frame a voice—a sweet, and low,
And thrilling voice of song ! when he came nigh,
To send the passion of its melody
Through his pierced bosom—on its tones to bear
My life's deep feeling, as the southern air
Wafts the faint myrtle's breath—to rise, to swell,
To sink away in accents of farewell,
Winning but one, *one* gush of tears, whose flow
Surely my parted spirit yet might know,
If love be strong as death !

III.

Now fair thou art,
Thou form, whose life is of my burning heart !

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Yet all the vision that within me wrought,
I cannot make thee. Oh! I might have given
Birth to creations of far nobler thought;
I might have kindled, with the fire of heaven,
Things not of such as die! But I have been
Too much alone! A heart whereon to lean,
With all these deep affections that o'erflow
My aching soul, and find no shore below;
An eye to be my star; a voice to bring
Hope o'er my path like sounds that breathe of spring:
These are denied me—dreamt of still in vain.
Therefore my brief aspirings from the chain
Are ever but as some wild fitful song,
Rising triumphantly, to die ere long
In dirge-like echoes.

IV.

Yet the world will see
Little of this, my parting work! in thee.
Thou shalt have fame! Oh, mockery! give the reed
From storms a shelter—give the drooping vine
Something round which its tendrils may entwine—
Give the parched flower a rain-drop, and the meed
Of love's kind words to woman! Worthless fame!
That in *his* bosom wins not for my name
Th' abiding place it ask'd! Yet how my heart,
In its own fairy world of song and art,
Once beat for praise! Are those high longings o'er?
That which I have been can I be no more?
Never! oh, never more! though still thy sky
Be blue as then, my glorious Italy!

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And though the music, whose rich breathings fill
Thine air with soul, be wandering past me still;
And though the mantle of thy sunlight streams
Unchanged on forms, instinct with poet-dreams.
Never! oh, never more! Where'er I move,
The shadow of this broken-hearted love
Is on me and around! Too well *they* know
Whose life is all within, too soon and well,
When there the blight hath settled! But I go
Under the silent wings of peace to dwell;
From the slow wasting, from the lonely pain,
The inward burning of those words—"*in vain*,"
Sear'd on the heart—I go. 'Twill soon be past!
Sunshine and song, and bright Italian heaven,
And thou, oh! thou, on whom my spirit cast
Unvalued wealth—who know'st not what was given
In that devotedness—the sad, and deep,
And unrepaid—farewell! If I could weep
Once, only once, beloved one! on thy breast,
Pouring my heart forth ere I sink to rest!
But that were happiness!—and unto me
Earth's gift is *fame*. Yet I was form'd to be
So richly bless'd! With thee to watch the sky,
Speaking not, feeling but that thou wert nigh;
With thee to listen, while the tones of song
Swept even as part of our sweet air along—
To listen silently; with thee to gaze
On forms, the deified of olden days—
This had been joy enough; and hour by hour;
From its glad well-springs drinking life and power,
How had my spirit soar'd, and made its fame
A glory for thy brow! Dreams, dreams!—the fire

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Burns faint within me. Yet I leave my name—
As a deep thrill may linger on the lyre
When its full chords are hush'd—awhile to live,
And one day haply in thy heart revive
Sad thoughts of me. I leave it, with a sound,
A spell o'er memory, mournfully profound ;
I leave it, on my country's air to dwell—
Say proudly yet—"*'Twas hers who loved me well !*"

GERTRUDE ; OR, FIDELITY TILL DEATH.

[The Baron Von der Wart, accused—though it is believed unjustly — as an accomplice in the assassination of the Emperor Albert, was bound alive on the wheel, and attended by his wife Gertrude, throughout his last agonising hours, with the most heroic devotedness. Her own sufferings, with those of her unfortunate husband, are most affectingly described in a letter which she afterwards addressed to a female friend, and which was published some years ago, at Haarlem, in a book entitled *Gertrude Von der Wart; or, Fidelity unto Death.*]

"Dark lowers our fate,
And terrible the storm that gathers o'er us ;
But nothing, till that latest agony
Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose
This fix'd and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house,
In the terrific face of armed law,
Yea, on the scaffold, if it needs must be,
I never will forsake thee."

JOANNA BAILLIE.

HER hands were clasp'd, her dark eyes raised,
The breeze threw back her hair ;
Up to the fearful wheel she gazed—
All that she loved was there.
The night was round her clear and cold,
The holy heaven above,

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Its pale stars watching to behold
The might of earthly love.

"And bid me not depart," she cried;
"My Rudolph, say not so!
This is no time to quit thy side—
Peace! peace! I cannot go.
Hath the world aught for *me* to fear,
When death is on thy brow?
The world! what means it? *Mine* is *here*—
I will not leave thee now.

"I have been with thee in thine hour
Of glory and of bliss;
Doubt not its memory's living power
To strengthen me through *this!*
And thou, mine honour'd love and true,
Bear on, bear nobly on!
We have the blessèd heaven in view,
Whose rest shall soon be won."

And were not these high words to flow
From woman's breaking heart?
Through all that night of bitterest woe
She bore her lofty part;
But oh! with such a glazing eye,
With such a curdling cheek—
Love, Love! of mortal agony
Thou, only *thou*, shouldst speak!

The wind rose high—but with it rose
Her voice, that he might hear:—

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Perchance that dark hour brought repose
To happy bosoms near;
While she sat striving with despair
Beside his tortured form,
And pouring her deep soul in prayer
Forth on the rushing storm.

She wiped the death-damps from his brow
With her pale hands and soft,
Whose touch upon the lute-chords low
Had still'd his heart so oft.
She spread her mantle o'er his breast,
She bathed his lips with dew,
And on his cheek such kisses press'd
As hope and joy ne'er knew.

Oh! lovely are ye, Love and Faith,
Enduring to the last!
She had her meed—one smile in death—
And his worn spirit pass'd!
While even as o'er a martyr's grave
She knelt on that sad spot,
And, weeping, bless'd the God who gave
Strength to forsake it not!

IMELDA.

"Sometimes
The young forgot the lessons they had learnt,
And loved when they should hate—like thee, Imelda!"[4]
Italy, a Poem.

"Passa la bella Donna, e par che dorma."
TASSO.

WE have the myrtle's breath around us here,
Amidst the fallen pillars: this hath been

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Some Naïad's fane of old. How brightly clear,
Flinging a vein of silver o'er the scene,
Up through the shadowy grass the fountain wells,
And music with it, gushing from beneath
The ivied altar! That sweet murmur tells
The rich wild-flowers no tale of woe or death;
Yet once the wave was darken'd, and a stain
Lay deep, and heavy drops—but not of rain—
On the dim violets by its marble bed,
And the pale shining water-lily's head.

Sad is that legend's truth.—A fair girl met
One whom she loved, by this lone temple's spring,
Just as the sun behind the pine-grove set,
And eve's low voice in whispers woke, to bring
All wanderers home. They stood, that gentle pair,
With the blue heaven of Italy above,
And citron-odours dying on the air,
And light leaves trembling round, and early love
Deep in each breast. What reck'd *their* souls of strife
Between their fathers? Unto them young life
Spread out the treasures of its vernal years;
And if they wept, they wept far other tears
Than the cold world brings forth. They stood, that hour,
Speaking of hope; while tree, and fount, and flower,
And star, just gleaming through the cypress boughs,
Seem'd holy things, as records of their vows.

But change came o'er the scene. A hurrying tread
Broke on the whispery shades. Imelda knew

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The footstep of her brother's wrath, and fled
Up where the cedars make yon avenue
Dim with green twilight: pausing there, she caught—
Was it the clash of swords? A swift dark thought
Struck down her lip's rich crimson as it pass'd,
And from her eye the sunny sparkle took
One moment with its fearfulness, and shook
Her slight frame fiercely, as a stormy blast
Might rock the rose. Once more, and yet once more,
She still'd her heart to listen—all was o'er;
Sweet summer winds alone were heard to sigh,
Bearing the nightingale's deep spirit by.

That night Imelda's voice was in the song—
Lovely it floated through the festive throng
Peopling her father's halls. That fatal night
Her eye look'd starry in its dazzling light,
And her cheek glow'd with beauty's flushing dyes,
Like a rich cloud of eve in southern skies—
A burning, ruby cloud. There were, whose gaze
Follow'd her form beneath the clear lamp's blaze,
And marvell'd at its radiance. But a few
Beheld the brightness of that feverish hue
With something of dim fear; and in that glance
Found strange and sudden tokens of unrest,
Startling to meet amidst the mazy dance,
Where thought, if present, an unbidden guest,
Comes not unmask'd. Howe'er this were, the time
Sped as it speeds with joy, and grief, and crime
Alike: and when the banquet's hall was left

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Unto its garlands of their bloom bereft;
When trembling stars look'd silvery in their wane,
And heavy flowers yet slumber'd, once again
There stole a footstep, fleet, and light, and lone,
Through the dim cedar shade—the step of one
That started at a leaf, of one that fled,
Of one that panted with some secret dread.
What did Imelda there? She sought the scene
Where love so late with youth and hope had been.
Bodings were on her soul; a shuddering thrill
Ran through each vein, when first the Naïad's rill
Met her with melody—sweet sounds and low:
We hear them yet, they live along its flow—
Her voice is music lost! The fountain-side
She gain'd—the wave flash'd forth—'twas darkly dyed
Even as from warrior-hearts; and on its edge,
Amidst the fern, and flowers, and moss-tufts deep,
There lay, as lull'd by stream and rustling sedge,
A youth, a graceful youth. "Oh! dost thou sleep?
Azzo!" she cried, "my Azzo! is this rest?"
But then her low tones falter'd:—"On thy breast
Is the stain—yes, 'tis blood! And that cold cheek—
That moveless lip!—thou dost not slumber?—speak,
Speak, Azzo, my beloved! No sound—no breath—
What hath come thus between our spirits? Death!
Death?—I but dream—I dream!" And there she stood,
A faint fair trembler, gazing first on blood,
With her fair arm around yon cypress thrown,
Her form sustain'd by that dark stem alone,

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And fading fast, like spell-struck maid of old,
Into white waves dissolving, clear and cold;
When from the grass her dimm'd eye caught a gleam—
'Twas where a sword lay shiver'd by the stream—
Her brother's sword!—she knew it; and she knew
'Twas with a venom'd point that weapon slew!
Woe for young love! But love is strong. There came
Strength upon woman's fragile heart and frame;
There came swift courage! On the dewy ground
She knelt, with all her dark hair floating round
Like a long silken stole; she knelt, and press'd
Her lips of glowing life to Azzo's breast,
Drawing the poison forth. A strange, sad sight!
Pale death, and fearless love, and solemn night!
—So the moon saw them last.
The morn came singing
Through the green forests of the Apennines,
With all her joyous birds their free flight winging,
And steps and voices out amongst the vines.
What found that dayspring *here?* Two fair forms laid
Like sculptured sleepers; from the myrtle shade
Casting a gleam of beauty o'er the wave,
Still, mournful, sweet. Were such things for the grave?
Could it be so indeed? That radiant girl,
Deck'd as for bridal hours!—long braids of pearl
Amidst her shadowy locks were faintly shining,
As tears might shine, with melancholy light;
And there was gold her slender waist entwining;
And her pale graceful arms—how sadly bright!

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And fiery gems upon her breast were lying,
And round her marble brow red roses dying.
But she died first!—the violet's hue had spread
O'er her sweet eyelids with repose oppress'd;
She had bow'd heavily her gentle head,
And on the youth's hush'd bosom sunk to rest.
So slept they well!—the poison's work was done;
Love with true heart had striven—but Death had won.

EDITH.

A TALE OF THE WOODS.*

"Du Heilige! rufe dein Kind zurück!
Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück,
Ich habe gelebt und geliebet."

WALLENSTEIN.

THE woods—oh! solemn are the boundless woods
Of the great western world when day declines,
And louder sounds the roll of distant floods,
More deep the rustling of the ancient pines.
When dimness gathers on the stilly air,
And mystery seems o'er every leaf to brood,
Awful it is for human heart to bear
The might and burden of the solitude!
Yet, in that hour, midst those green wastes, there sate
One young and fair; and oh! how desolate!
But undismay'd—while sank the crimson light,
And the high cedars darken'd with the night.

* Founded on incidents related in an American work, *Sketches of Connecticut.*

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Alone she sate ; though many lay around,
They, pale and silent on the bloody ground,
Were sever'd from her need and from her woe,
Far as death severs life. O'er that wild spot
Combat had raged, and brought the valiant low,
And left them, with the history of their lot,
Unto the forest oaks—a fearful scene
For her whose home of other days had been
Midst the fair halls of England ! But the love
Which fill'd her soul was strong to cast out fear ;
And by its might upborne all else above,
She shrank not—mark'd not that the dead were near.
Of him alone she thought, whose languid head
Faintly upon her wedded bosom fell ;
Memory of aught but him on earth was fled,
While heavily she felt his life-blood well
Fast o'er her garments forth, and vainly bound
With her torn robe and hair the streaming wound—
Yet hoped, still hoped ! Oh ! from such hope how long
Affection woos the whispers that deceive,
Even when the pressure of dismay grows strong !
And we, that weep, watch, tremble, ne'er believe
The blow indeed can fall. So bow'd she there
Over the dying, while unconscious prayer
Fill'd all her soul. Now pour'd the moonlight down,
Veining the pine-stems through the foliage brown,
And fire-flies, kindling up the leafy place,
Cast fitful radiance o'er the warrior's face,
Whereby she caught its changes. To her eye,
The eye that faded look'd through gathering haze,

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Whence love, o'ermastering mortal agony,
Lifted a long, deep, melancholy gaze,
When voice was not; that fond, sad meaning pass'd—
She knew the fulness of her woe at last!
One shriek the forests heard—and mute she lay
And cold, yet clasping still the precious clay
To her scarce-heaving breast. O Love and Death!
Ye have sad meetings on this changeful earth,
Many and sad!—but airs of heavenly breath
Shall melt the links which bind you, for your birth
Is far apart.

Now light of richer hue
Than the moon sheds, came flushing mist and dew;
The pines grew red with morning; fresh winds play'd;
Bright-colour'd birds with splendour cross'd the shade,
Flitting on flower-like wings; glad murmurs broke
From reed, and spray, and leaf—the living strings
Of earth's Æolian lyre, whose music woke
Into young life and joy all happy things.
And she, too, woke from that long dreamless trance,
The widow'd Edith: fearfully her glance
Fell, as in doubt, on faces dark and strange,
And dusky forms. A sudden sense of change
Flash'd o'er her spirit, even ere memory swept
The tide of anguish back with thoughts that slept;
Yet half instinctively she rose, and spread
Her arms, as 'twere for something lost or fled,
Then faintly sank again. The forest-bough,
With all its whispers, waved not o'er her now.
Where was she? Midst the people of the wild,
By the red hunter's fire: an aged chief,

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Whose home look'd sad—for therein play'd no child—
Had borne her, in the stillness of her grief,
To that lone cabin of the woods; and there,
Won by a form so desolately fair,
Or touch'd with thoughts from some past sorrow sprung,
O'er her low couch an Indian matron hung;
While in grave silence, yet with earnest eye,
The ancient warrior of the waste stood by,
Bending in watchfulness his proud grey head,
And leaning on his bow.

And life return'd,
Life, but with all its memories of the dead,
To Edith's heart; and well the sufferer learn'd
Her task of meek endurance—well she wore
The chasten'd grief that humbly can adore
Midst blinding tears. But unto that old pair,
Even as a breath of spring's awakening air,
Her presence was; or as a sweet wild tune
Bringing back tender thoughts, which all too soon
Depart with childhood. Sadly they had seen
A daughter to the land of spirits go;
And ever from that time her fading mien,
And voice, like winds of summer, soft and low,
Had haunted their dim years: but Edith's face
Now look'd in holy sweetness from her place,
And they again seem'd parents. Oh! the joy,
The rich deep blessedness—though earth's alloy,
Fear, that still bodes, be there—of pouring forth
The heart's whole power of love, its wealth and worth

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Of strong affection, in one healthful flow,
On something all its own! that kindly glow,
Which to shut inward is consuming pain,
Gives the glad soul its flowering time again,
When, like the sunshine, freed. And gentle cares
Th' adopted Edith meekly gave for theirs
Who loved her thus. Her spirit dwelt the while
With the departed, and her patient smile
Spoke of farewells to earth; yet still she pray'd
E'en o'er her soldier's lowly grave, for aid
One purpose to fulfil, to leave one trace
Brightly recording that her dwelling-place
Had been among the wilds; for well she knew
The secret whisper of her bosom true,
Which warn'd her hence.

And now, by many a word
Link'd unto moments when the heart was stirr'd—
By the sweet mournfulness of many a hymn,
Sung when the woods at eve grew hush'd and dim—
By the persuasion of her fervent eye,
All eloquent with childlike piety—
By the still beauty of her life she strove
To win for heaven, and heaven-born truth, the love
Pour'd out on her so freely. Nor in vain
Was that soft-breathing influence to enchain
The soul in gentle bonds; by slow degrees
Light follow'd on, as when a summer breeze
Parts the deep masses of the forest shade,
And lets the sunbeam through. Her voice was made
Even such a breeze; and she, a lowly guide,
By faith and sorrow raised and purified,
So to the Cross her Indian fosterers led,

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Until their prayers were one. When morning spread
O'er the blue lake, and when the sunset's glow
Touch'd into golden bronze the cypress bough,
And when the quiet of the Sabbath time
Sank on her heart, though no melodious chime
Waken'd the wilderness, their prayers were one.
Now might she pass in hope—her work was done!
And she *was* passing from the woods away—
The broken flower of England might not stay
Amidst those alien shades. Her eye was bright
Even yet with something of a starry light,
But her form wasted, and her fair young cheek
Wore oft and patiently a fatal streak,
A rose whose root was death. The parting sigh
Of autumn through the forests had gone by,
And the rich maple o'er her wanderings lone
Its crimson leaves in many a shower had strown,
Flushing the air; and winter's blast had been
Amidst the pines; and now a softer green
Fringed their dark boughs: for spring again had
come,
The sunny spring! but Edith to her home
Was journeying fast. Alas! we think it sad
To part with life when all the earth looks glad
In her young lovely things—when voices break
Into sweet sounds, and leaves and blossoms wake:
Is it not brighter, then, in that far clime
Where graves are not, nor blights of changeful time,
If *here* such glory dwell with passing blooms,
Such golden sunshine rest around the tombs?
So thought the dying one. 'Twas early day,
And sounds and odours, with the breezes' play

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Whispering of spring-time, through the cabin door,
Unto her couch life's farewell sweetness bore.
Then with a look where all her hope awoke,
"My father!"—to the grey-hair'd chief she spoke—
"Know'st thou that I depart?" "I know, I know,"
He answer'd mournfully, "that thou must go
To thy beloved, my daughter!" "Sorrow not
For me, kind mother!" with meek smiles once more
She murmur'd in low tones: "one happy lot
Awaits us, friends! upon the better shore;
For we have pray'd together in one trust,
And lifted our frail spirits from the dust
To God, who gave them. Lay me by mine own,
Under the cedar shade: where he is gone,
Thither I go. There will my sisters be,
And the dead parents, lisping at whose knee
My childhood's prayer was learn'd—the Saviour's prayer
Which now *ye* know—and I shall meet you there.
Father and gentle mother! ye have bound
The bruisèd reed, and mercy shall be found
By Mercy's children." From the matron's eye
Dropp'd tears, her sole and passionate reply.
But Edith felt them not; for now a sleep
Solemnly beautiful—a stillness deep,
Fell on her settled face. Then, sad and slow,
And mantling up his stately head in woe,
"Thou'rt passing hence," he sang, that warrior old,
In sounds like those by plaintive waters roll'd.

"THOU'RT passing from the lake's green side,
And the hunter's hearth away:

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For the time of flowers, for the summer's pride,
Daughter ! thou canst not stay.

"Thou'rt journeying to thy spirit's home,
Where the skies are ever clear :
The corn-month's golden hours will come,
But they shall not find thee here.

"And we shall miss thy voice, my bird !
Under our whispering pine ;
Music shall midst the leaves be heard,
But not a song like thine.

"A breeze that roves o'er stream and hill,
Telling of winter gone,
Hath such sweet falls—yet caught we still
A farewell in its tone.

"But thou, my bright one ! thou shalt be
Where farewell sounds are o'er ;
Thou, in the eyes thou lovest, shalt see
No fear of parting more.

"The mossy grave thy tears have wet,
And the wind's wild moanings by,
Thou with thy kindred shalt forget,
Midst flowers—not such as die.

"The shadow from thy brow shall melt
The sorrow from thy strain,
But where thine earthly smile hath dwelt
Our hearts shall thirst in vain.

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"Dim will our cabin be, and lone,
When thou, its light, art fled;
Yet hath thy step the pathway shown
Unto the happy dead.

"And we will follow thee, our guide!
And join that shining band;
Thou'rt passing from the lake's green side—
Go to the better land!"

The song had ceased—the listeners caught no breath:
That lovely sleep had melted into death.

THE INDIAN CITY.*

"What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it."

Childe Harold.

I.

Royal in splendour went down the day
On the plain where an Indian city lay,
With its crown of domes o'er the forest high,
Red, as if fused in the burning sky;
And its deep groves pierced by the rays which made
A bright stream's way through each long arcade,
Till the pillar'd vaults of the banian stood
Like torch-lit aisles midst the solemn wood;
And the plantain glitter'd with leaves of gold,
As a tree midst the genii gardens old,

* From a tale in Forbes's *Oriental Memoirs.*

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And the cypress lifted a blazing spire,
And the stems of the cocoas were shafts of fire.
Many a white pagoda's gleam
Slept lovely round upon lake and stream,
Broken alone by the lotus flowers,
As they caught the glow of the sun's last hours,
Like rosy wine in their cups, and shed
Its glory forth on their crystal bed.
Many a graceful Hindoo maid,
With the water-vase from the palmy shade,
Came gliding light as the desert's roe,
Down marble steps, to the tanks below ;
And a cool sweet plashing was ever heard,
As the molten glass of the wave was stirr'd,
And a murmur, thrilling the scented air,
Told where the Bramin bow'd in prayer.
—There wander'd a noble Moslem boy
Through the scene of beauty in breathless joy ;
He gazed where the stately city rose,
Like a pageant of clouds, in its red repose ;
He turned where birds through the gorgeous gloom
Of the woods went glancing on starry plume ;
He track'd the brink of the shining lake,
By the tall canes feather'd in tuft and brake;
Till the path he chose, in its mazes, wound
To the very heart of the holy ground.

And there lay the water, as if enshrined
In a rocky urn, from the sun and wind,
Bearing the hues of the grove on high,
Far down through its dark still purity.

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The flood beyond, to the fiery west,
Spread out like a metal mirror's breast;
But that lone bay, in its dimness deep,
Seem'd made for the swimmer's joyous leap,
For the stag athirst from the noontide chase,
For all free things of the wild wood's race.

Like a falcon's glance on the wide blue sky,
Was the kindling flash of the boy's glad eye;
Like a sea-bird's flight to the foaming wave,
From the shadowy bank was the bound he gave;
Dashing the spray-drops, cold and white,
O'er the glossy leaves in its young delight,
And bowing his locks to the waters clear—
Alas! he dreamt not that fate was near.

His mother look'd from her tent the while,
O'er heaven and earth with a quiet smile:
She, on her way unto Mecca's fane,
Had stay'd the march of her pilgrim train,
Calmly to linger a few brief hours
In the Bramin city's glorious bowers;
For the pomp of the forest, the wave's bright fall,
The red gold of sunset—she loved them all.

II.

The moon rose clear in the splendour given
To the deep-blue night of an Indian heaven;
The boy from the high-arch'd woods came back—
Oh! what had he met in his lonely track?
The serpent's glance, through the long reeds bright?
The arrowy spring of the tiger's might?

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No! yet as one by a conflict worn,
With his graceful hair all soil'd and torn,
And a gloom on the lids of his darken'd eye,
And a gash on his bosom—he came to die!
He look'd for the face to his young heart sweet,
And found it, and sank at his mother's feet.

"Speak to me! whence doth the swift blood run?
What hath befallen thee, my child, my son?"
The mist of death on his brow lay pale,
But his voice just linger'd to breathe the tale,
Murmuring faintly of wrongs and scorn,
And wounds from the children of Brahma borne.
This was the doom for a Moslem found
With a foot profane on their holy ground—
This was for sullying the pure waves, free
Unto them alone—'twas their god's decree.

A change came o'er his wandering look—
The mother shriek'd not then nor shook:
Breathless she knelt in her son's young blood,
Rending her mantle to stanch its flood;
But it rush'd like a river which none may stay,
Bearing a flower to the deep away.
That which our love to the earth would chain,
Fearfully striving with heaven in vain—
That which fades from us, while yet we hold,
Clasp'd to our bosoms, its mortal mould,
Was fleeting before her, afar and fast;
One moment—the soul from the face had pass'd!

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Are there no words for that common woe?
Ask of the thousands its depth that know!
The boy had breathed, in his dreaming rest,
Like a low-voiced dove, on her gentle breast;
He had stood, when she sorrow'd, beside her knee,
Painfully stilling his quick heart's glee;
He had kiss'd from her cheek the widow's tears,
With the loving lip of his infant years:
He had smiled o'er her path like a bright spring day—
Now in his blood on the earth he lay!
Murder'd! Alas! and we love so well
In a world where anguish like this can dwell!

She bow'd down mutely o'er her dead—
They that stood round her watch'd in dread;
They watch'd—she knew not they were by—
Her soul sat veil'd in its agony.
On the silent lip she press'd no kiss—
Too stern was the grasp of her pangs for this:
She shed no tear, as her face bent low
O'er the shining hair of the lifeless brow;
She look'd but into the half-shut eye
With a gaze that found there no reply,
And, shrieking, mantled her head from sight,
And fell, struck down by her sorrow's might.

And what deep change, what work of power,
Was wrought on her secret soul that hour?
How rose the lonely one? She rose
Like a prophetess from dark repose!

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And proudly flung from her face the veil,
And shook the hair from her forehead pale,
And midst her wondering handmaids stood,
With the sudden glance of a dauntless mood—
Ay, lifting up to the midnight sky
A brow in its regal passion high,
With a close and rigid grasp she press'd
The blood-stain'd robe to her heaving breast,
And said—"Not yet, not yet I weep,
Not yet my spirit shall sink or sleep!
Not till yon city, in ruins rent,
Be piled for its victim's monument.
Cover his dust! bear it on before!
It shall visit those temple gates once more."

And away in the train of the dead she turn'd,
The strength of her step was the heart that burn'd;
And the Bramin groves in the starlight smiled,
As the mother pass'd with her slaughter'd child.

III.

Hark! a wild sound of the desert's horn
Through the woods round the Indian city borne,
A peal of the cymbal and tambour afar—
War! 'tis the gathering of Moslem war!
The Bramin look'd from the leaguer'd towers—
He saw the wild archer amidst his bowers;
And the lake that flash'd through the plantain shade,
As the light of the lances along it play'd;
And the canes that shook as if winds were high,
When the fiery steed of the waste swept by;

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And the camp as it lay like a billowy sea,
Wide round the sheltering banian-tree.

There stood one tent from the rest apart—
That was the place of a wounded heart.
Oh ! deep is a wounded heart, and strong
A voice that cries against mighty wrong ;
And full of death as a hot wind's blight,
Doth the ire of a crush'd affection light.

Maimuna from realm to realm had pass'd,
And her tale had rung like a trumpet's blast.
There had been words from her pale lips pour'd,
Each one a spell to unsheath the sword.
The Tartar had sprung from his steed to hear,
And the dark chief of Araby grasp'd his spear,
Till a chain of long lances begirt the wall,
And a vow was recorded that doom'd its fall.
Back with the dust of her son she came,
When her voice had kindled that lightning flame ;
She came in the might of a queenly foe,
Banner, and javelin, and bended bow ;
But a deeper power on her forehead sate—
There sought the warrior his star of fate :
Her eye's wild flash through the tented line
Was hail'd as a spirit and a sign,
And the faintest tone from her lip was caught
As a sibyl's breath of prophetic thought.
—Vain, bitter glory !—the gift of grief,
That lights up vengeance to find relief,
Transient and faithless ! it cannot fill
So the deep void of the heart, nor still

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The yearning left by a broken tie,
That haunted fever of which we die!

Sickening she turn'd from her sad renown,
As a king in death might reject his crown.
Slowly the strength of the walls gave way—
She wither'd faster from day to day:
All the proud sounds of that banner'd plain,
To stay the flight of her soul were vain;
Like an eagle caged, it had striven, and worn
The frail dust, ne'er for such conflicts born,
Till the bars were rent, and the hour was come
For its fearful rushing through darkness home.

The bright sun set in his pomp and pride,
As on that eve when the fair boy died:
She gazed from her couch, and a softness fell
O'er her weary heart with the day's farewell;
She spoke, and her voice, in its dying tone,
Had an echo of feelings that long seem'd flown.
She murmur'd a low sweet cradle-song,
Strange midst the din of a warrior throng—
A song of the time when her boy's young cheek
Had glow'd on her breast in its slumber meek.
But something which breathed from that mournful strain
Sent a fitful gust o'er her soul again;
And starting, as if from a dream, she cried—
"Give him proud burial at my side!
There, by yon lake, where the palm-boughs wave,
When the temples are fallen, make there our grave."

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And the temples fell, though the spirit pass'd,
That stay'd not for victory's voice at last;
When the day was won for the martyr dead,
For the broken heart and the bright blood shed.

Through the gates of the vanquish'd the Tartar steed
Bore in the avenger with foaming speed;
Free swept the flame through the idol fanes,
And the streams glow'd red, as from warrior veins;
And the sword of the Moslem, let loose to slay,
Like the panther leapt on its flying prey,
Till a city of ruin begirt the shade
Where the boy and his mother at rest were laid.

Palace and tower on that plain were left,
Like fallen trees by the lightning cleft;
The wild vine mantled the stately square,
The Rajah's throne was the serpent's lair,
And the jungle grass o'er the altar sprung—
This was the work of one deep heart wrung!

THE PEASANT GIRL OF THE RHONE.

——"There is but one place in the world—
Thither, where he lies buried!
* * * *
There, there is all that still remains of him:
That single spot is the whole earth to me."
COLERIDGE'S *Wallenstein.*

"Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert."
Childe Harold.

THERE went a warrior's funeral through the night,
A waving of tall plumes, a ruddy light

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Of torches, fitfully and wildly thrown
From the high woods, along the sweeping Rhone,
Far down the waters. Heavily and dead,
Under the moaning trees, the horse-hoof's tread
In muffled sounds upon the greensward fell,
As chieftains pass'd; and solemnly the swell
Of the deep requiem, o'er the gleaming river
Borne with the gale, and with the leaves' low shiver,
Floated and died. Proud mourners there, yet pale,
Wore man's mute anguish sternly;—but of *one*,
Oh, who shall speak? What words *his* brow unveil?
A father following to the grave his son!—
That is no grief to picture! Sad and slow,
Thro' the wood-shadows, moved the knightly train,
With youth's fair form upon the bier laid low—
Fair even when found amidst the bloody slain,
Stretch'd by its broken lance. They reach'd the lone
Baronial chapel, where the forest-gloom
Fell heaviest, for the massy boughs had grown
Into thick archways, as to vault the tomb.
Stately they trode the hollow-ringing aisle,
A strange deep echo shudder'd through the pile,
Till crested heads at last in silence bent
Round the De Coucis' antique monument,
When dust to dust was given:—and Aymer slept
Beneath the drooping banners of his line,
Whose broider'd folds the Syrian wind had swept
Proudly and oft o'er fields of Palestine.
So the sad rite was closed. The sculptor gave
Trophies, ere long, to deck that lordly grave;
And the pale image of a youth, array'd
As warriors are for fight, but calmly laid

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In slumber on his shield. Then all was done—
All still around the dead. His name was heard
Perchance when wine-cups flow'd, and hearts were stirr'd
By some old song, or tale of battle won
Told round the hearth. But in his father's breast
Manhood's high passions woke again, and press'd
On to their mark; and in his friend's clear eye
There dwelt no shadow of a dream gone by;
And with the brethren of his fields, the feast
Was gay as when the voice whose sounds had ceased
Mingled with theirs. Even thus life's rushing tide
Bears back affection from the grave's dark side;
Alas! to think of this!—the heart's void place
Fill'd up so soon!—so like a summer cloud,
All that we loved to pass and leave no trace!—
He lay forgotten in his early shroud.
Forgotten?—not of all! The sunny smile
Glancing in play o'er that proud lip erewhile,
And the dark locks, whose breezy waving threw
A gladness round, whene'er their shade withdrew
From the bright brow; and all the sweetness lying
Within that eagle eye's jet radiance deep,
And all the music with that young voice dying,
Whose joyous echoes made the quick heart leap
As at a hunter's bugle—these things lived
Still in one breast, whose silent love survived
The pomps of kindred sorrow. Day by day,
On Aymer's tomb fresh flowers in garlands lay,
Through the dim fane soft summer odours breathing,
And all the pale sepulchral trophies wreathing,
And with a flush of deeper brilliance glowing
In the rich light, like molten rubies flowing

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Through storied windows down. The violet there
Might speak of love—a secret love and lowly;
And the rose image all things fleet and fair;
And the faint passion-flower, the sad and holy,
Tell of diviner hopes. But whose light hand,
As for an altar, wove the radiant band?
Whose gentle nurture brought, from hidden dells,
That gem-like wealth of blossoms and sweet bells,
To blush through every season? Blight and chill
Might touch the changing woods; but duly still
For years those gorgeous coronals renew'd,
And brightly clasping marble spear and helm,
Even through mid-winter, fill'd the solitude
With a strange smile—a glow of summer's realm.
Surely some fond and fervent heart was pouring
Its youth's vain worship on the dust, adoring
In lone devotedness!

One spring morn rose,
And found, within that tomb's proud shadow laid—
Oh! not as midst the vineyards, to repose
From the fierce noon—a dark-hair'd peasant maid.
Who could reveal her story? That still face
Had once been fair; for on the clear arch'd brow
And the curved lip there lingered yet such grace
As sculpture gives its dreams; and long and low
The deep black lashes, o'er the half-shut eye—
For death was on its lids—fell mournfully.
But the cold cheek was sunk, the raven hair
Dimm'd, the slight form all wasted, as by care.
Whence came that early blight? *Her* kindred's place
Was not amidst the high De Couci race;

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Yet there her shrine had been! She grasp'd a wreath—
The tomb's last garland!—This was love in death.

INDIAN WOMAN'S DEATH-SONG.

[An Indian woman, driven to despair by her husband's desertion of her for another wife, entered a canoe with her children, and rowed it down the Mississippi towards a cataract. Her voice was heard from the shore singing a mournful death-song, until overpowered by the sound of the waters in which she perished. The tale is related in Long's "Expedition to the Source of St Peter's River."]

"Non, je ne puis vivre avec un cœur brisé. Il faut que je retrouve la joie, et que je m'unisse aux esprits libres de l'air."
Bride of Messina—Translated by MADAME DE STAEL.

"Let not my child be a girl, for very sad is the life of a woman."
The Prairie.

Down a broad river of the western wilds,
Piercing thick forest-glooms, a light canoe
Swept with the current: fearful was the speed
Of the frail bark, as by a tempest's wing
Borne leaf-like on to where the mist of spray
Rose with the cataract's thunder. Yet within,
Proudly, and dauntlessly, and all alone,
Save that a babe lay sleeping at her breast,
A woman stood! Upon her Indian brow
Sat a strange gladness, and her dark hair waved
As if triumphantly. She press'd her child,
In its bright slumber, to her beating heart,
And lifted her sweet voice, that rose awhile
Above the sound of waters, high and clear,
Wafting a wild proud strain—a song of death.

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"ROLL swiftly to the spirit's land, thou mighty stream and free!
Father of ancient waters,[5] roll! and bear our lives with thee!
The weary bird that storms have toss'd would seek the sunshine's calm,
And the deer that hath the arrow's hurt flies to the woods of balm.

"Roll on!—my warrior's eye hath look'd upon another's face,
And mine hath faded from his soul, as fades a moonbeam's trace:
My shadow comes not o'er his path, my whisper to his dream,
He flings away the broken reed. Roll swifter yet, thou stream!

"The voice that spoke of other days is hush'd within *his* breast,
But *mine* its lonely music haunts, and will not let me rest;
It sings a low and mournful song of gladness that is gone—
I cannot live without that light. Father of waves! roll on!

"Will he not miss the bounding step that met him from the chase?
The heart of love that made his home an ever-sunny place?

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The hand that spread the hunter's board, and deck'd
his couch of yore?—
He will not! Roll, dark foaming stream, on to the
better shore!

"Some blessed fount amidst the woods of that bright
land must flow,
Whose waters from my soul may lave the memory
of this woe;
Some gentle wind must whisper there, whose breath
may waft away
The burden of the heavy night, the sadness of the day.

"And thou, my babe! though born, like me, for
woman's weary lot,
Smile!—to that wasting of the heart, my own! I
leave thee not;
Too bright a thing art *thou* to pine in aching love
away—
Thy mother bears thee far, young fawn! from
sorrow and decay.

"She bears thee to the glorious bowers where none
are heard to weep,
And where th' unkind one hath no power again to
trouble sleep;
And where the soul shall find its youth, as wakening
from a dream:
One moment, and that realm is ours. On, on, dark
rolling stream!"

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JOAN OF ARC IN RHEIMS.

["Jeanne d'Arc avait eu la joie de voir à Chalons quelques amis de son enfance. Une joie plus ineffable encore l'attendait à Rheims, au sein de son triomphe: Jacques d'Arc, son père, y se trouva, aussitôt que de troupes de Charles VII. y furent entrées; et comme les deux frères de notre héroine l'avaient accompagnée, elle se vit pour un instant au milieu de sa famille, dans les bras d'un père vertueux."—*Vie de Jeanne d'Arc.*]

> "Thou hast a charmèd cup, O Fame!
> A draught that mantles high,
> And seems to lift this earth-born frame
> Above mortality:
> Away! to me—a woman—bring
> Sweet waters from affection's spring!"

THAT was a joyous day in Rheims of old,
When peal on peal of mighty music roll'd
Forth from her throng'd cathedral; while around,
A multitude, whose billows made no sound,
Chain'd to a hush of wonder, though elate
With victory, listen'd at their temple's gate.
And what was done within? Within, the light,
Through the rich gloom of pictured windows flowing,
Tinged with soft awfulness a stately sight—
The chivalry of France their proud heads bowing
In martial vassalage! While midst that ring,
And shadow'd by ancestral tombs, a king
Received his birthright's crown. For this, the hymn
Swell'd out like rushing waters, and the day
With the sweet censer's misty breath grew dim,
As through long aisles it floated o'er th' array
Of arms and sweeping stoles. But who, alone

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And unapproach'd, beside the altar stone,
With the white banner forth like sunshine streaming,
And the gold helm through clouds of fragrance gleaming,
Silent and radiant stood? The helm was raised,
And the fair face reveal'd, that upward gazed,
Intensely worshipping—a still, clear face,
Youthful, but brightly solemn! Woman's cheek
And brow were there, in deep devotion meek,
Yet glorified, with inspiration's trace
On its pure paleness; while, enthroned above,
The pictured Virgin, with her smile of love,
Seem'd bending o'er her votaress. That slight form!
Was that the leader through the battle storm?
Had the soft light in that adoring eye
Guided the warrior where the swords flash'd high?
'Twas so, even so!—and thou, the shepherd's child,
Joanne, the lowly dreamer of the wild!
Never before, and never since that hour,
Hath woman, mantled with victorious power,
Stood forth as *thou* beside the shrine didst stand,
Holy amidst the knighthood of the land,
And, beautiful with joy and with renown,
Lift thy white banner o'er the olden crown,
Ransom'd for France by thee!

The rites are done.
Now let the dome with trumpet-notes be shaken,
And bid the echoes of the tomb awaken,
And come thou forth, that heaven's rejoicing sun
May give thee welcome from thine own blue skies,
Daughter of victory! A triumphant strain,

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A proud rich stream of warlike melodies,
Gush'd through the portals of the antique fane,
And forth she came. Then rose a nation's sound:
Oh! what a power to bid the quick heart bound,
The wind bears onward with the stormy cheer
Man gives to glory on her high career!
Is there indeed such power?—far deeper dwells
In one kind household voice, to reach the cells
Whence happiness flows forth! The shouts that fill'd
The hollow heaven tempestuously, were still'd
One moment; and in that brief pause, the tone,
As of a breeze that o'er her home had blown,
Sank on the bright maid's heart. "Joanne!"—Who spoke
Like those whose childhood with *her* childhood grew
Under one roof? "Joanne!"—*that* murmur broke
With sounds of weeping forth! She turn'd—she knew
Beside her, mark'd from all the thousands there,
In the calm beauty of his silver hair,
The stately shepherd; and the youth, whose joy,
From his dark eye flash'd proudly; and the boy,
The youngest born, that ever loved her best:—
"Father! and ye, my brothers!" On the breast
Of that grey sire she sank—and swiftly back,
Even in an instant, to their native track
Her free thoughts flow'd. She saw the pomp no more,
The plumes, the banners: to her cabin-door,
And to the Fairy's Fountain[6] in the glade,
Where her young sisters by her side had play'd,
And to her hamlet's chapel, where it rose
Hallowing the forest unto deep repose,

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Her spirit turn'd. The very wood-note, sung
In early spring-time by the bird, which dwelt
Where o'er her father's roof the beech leaves hung,
Was in her heart; a music heard and felt,
Winning her back to nature. She unbound
The helm of many battles from her head,
And, with her bright locks bow'd to sweep the ground,
Lifting her voice up, wept for joy and said—
"Bless me, my father! bless me! and with thee,
To the still cabin and the beechen tree,
Let me return!"
Oh! never did thine eye
Through the green haunts of happy infancy
Wander again, Joanne! Too much of fame
Had shed its radiance on thy peasant name;
And bought alone by gifts beyond all price—
The trusting heart's repose, the paradise
Of home, with all its loves—doth fate allow
The crown of glory unto woman's brow.

PAULINE.

"To die for what we love! Oh! there is power
In the true heart, and pride, and joy, for *this*:
It is to *live* without the vanish'd light
That strength is needed."

"Così trapassa al trapassar d'un Giorno
Della vita mortal il fiore e'l verde."
TASSO.

ALONG the starlit Seine went music swelling,
Till the air thrill'd with its exulting mirth;

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Proudly it floated, even as if no dwelling
For cares or stricken hearts were found on earth;
And a glad sound the measure lightly beat,
A happy chime of many dancing feet.

For in a palace of the land that night,
Lamps, and fresh roses, and green leaves were hung,
And from the painted walls a stream of light
On flying forms beneath soft splendour flung;
But loveliest far amidst the revel's pride
Was one—the lady from the Danube side.[7]

Pauline, the meekly bright! though now no more
Her clear eye flash'd with youth's all-tameless glee,
Yet something holier than its dayspring wore,
There in soft rest lay beautiful to see;
A charm with graver, tenderer, sweetness fraught—
The blending of deep love and matron thought.

Through the gay throng she moved, serenely fair,
And such calm joy as fills a moonlight sky
Sat on her brow beneath its graceful hair,
As her young daughter in the dance went by,
With the fleet step of one that yet hath known
Smiles and kind voices in this world alone.

Lurk'd there no secret boding in her breast?
Did no faint whisper warn of evil nigh?
Such oft awake when most the heart seems blest
Midst the light laughter of festivity.

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Whence come those tones? Alas! enough we know
To mingle fear with all triumphal show!

Who spoke of evil when young feet were flying
In fairy rings around the echoing hall?
Soft airs through braided locks in perfume sighing,
Glad pulses beating unto music's call?
Silence!—the minstrels pause—and hark! a sound,
A strange quick rustling which their notes had drown'd!

And lo! a light upon the dancers breaking—
Not such their clear and silvery lamps had shed!
From the gay dream of revelry awaking,
One moment holds them still in breathless dread.
The wild fierce lustre grows: then bursts a cry—
Fire! through the hall and round it gathering—fly!

And forth they rush, as chased by sword and spear,
To the green coverts of the garden bowers—
A gorgeous masque of pageantry and fear,
Startling the birds and trampling down the flowers:
While from the dome behind, red sparkles driven
Pierce the dark stillness of the midnight heaven.

And where is she—Pauline? the hurrying throng
Have swept her onward, as a stormy blast
Might sweep some faint o'erwearied bird along—
Till now the threshold of that death is past,
And free she stands beneath the starry skies,
Calling her child—but no sweet voice replies.

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"Bertha! where art thou? Speak! oh, speak, my own!"
Alas! unconscious of her pangs the while,
The gentle girl, in fear's cold grasp alone,
Powerless had sunk within the blazing pile;
A young bright form, deck'd gloriously for death,
With flowers all shrinking from the flame's fierce breath!

But oh! thy strength, deep love! There is no power
To stay the mother from that rolling grave,
Though fast on high the fiery volumes tower,
And forth like banners from each lattice wave:
Back, back she rushes through a host combined—
Mighty is anguish, with affection twined!

And what bold step may follow, midst the roar
Of the red billows, o'er their prey that rise?
None!—Courage there stood still—and never more
Did those fair forms emerge on human eyes!
Was one bright meeting theirs, one wild farewell?
And died they heart to heart?—Oh! who can tell?

Freshly and cloudlessly the morning broke
On that sad palace, midst its pleasure shades;
Its painted roofs had sunk—yet black with smoke
And lonely stood its marble colonnades:
But yester eve their shafts with wreaths were bound,
Now lay the scene one shrivell'd scroll around!

And bore the ruins no recording trace
Of all that woman's heart had dared and done?

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Yes! there were gems to mark its mortal place,
That forth from dust and ashes dimly shone!
Those had the mother, on her gentle breast,
Worn round her child's fair image, there at rest.

And they were all!—the tender and the true
Left this alone her sacrifice to prove,
Hallowing the spot where mirth once lightly flew,
To deep lone chasten'd thoughts of grief and love.
Oh! we have need of patient faith below,
To clear away the mysteries of such woe!

JUANA.

[Juana, mother of the Emperor Charles V., upon the death of her husband, Philip the Handsome of Austria, who had treated her with uniform neglect, had his body laid upon a bed of state, in a magnificent dress; and being possessed with the idea that it would revive, watched it for a length of time, incessantly waiting for the moment of returning life.]

> "It is but dust thou look'st upon. This love,
> This wild and passionate idolatry,
> What doth it in the shadow of the grave?
> Gather it back within thy lonely heart,
> So must it ever end: too much we give
> Unto the things that perish."

THE night wind shook the tapestry round an ancient palace room,
And torches, as it rose and fell, waved through the gorgeous gloom,

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And o'er a shadowy regal couch threw fitful gleams and red,
Where a woman with long raven hair sat watching by the dead.

Pale shone the features of the dead, yet glorious still to see,
Like a hunter or a chief struck down while his heart and step were free:
No shroud he wore, no robe of death, but there majestic lay,
Proudly and sadly glittering in royalty's array.

But she that with the dark hair watch'd by the cold slumberer's side,
On *her* wan cheek no beauty dwelt, and in her garb no pride;
Only her full impassion'd eyes, as o'er that clay she bent,
A wildness and a tenderness in strange resplendence blent.

And as the swift thoughts cross'd her soul, like shadows of a cloud,
Amidst the silent room of death the dreamer spoke aloud;
She spoke to him that could not hear, and cried, "Thou yet wilt wake,
And learn my watchings and my tears, beloved one! for thy sake.

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"They told me this was death, but well I knew it could not be;
Fairest and stateliest of the earth! who spoke of death for *thee?*
They would have wrapp'd the funeral shroud thy gallant form around,
But I forbade—and there thou art, a monarch, robed and crown'd!

"With all thy bright locks gleaming still, their coronal beneath,
And thy brow so proudly beautiful—who said that this was death?
Silence hath been upon thy lips, and stillness round thee long,
But the hopeful spirit in my breast is all undimm'd and strong.

"I know thou hast not loved me yet; I am not fair like thee,
The very glance of whose clear eye threw round a light of glee!
A frail and drooping form is mine—a cold unsmiling cheek—
Oh! I have but a woman's heart wherewith *thy* heart to seek.

"But when thou wakest, my prince, my lord! and hear'st how I have kept
A lonely vigil by thy side, and o'er thee pray'd and wept—

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How in one long deep dream of thee my nights and days have past—
Surely that humble patient love *must* win back love at last!

And thou wilt smile—my own, my own, shall be the sunny smile,
Which brightly fell, and joyously, on all *but* me erewhile!
No more in vain affection's thirst my weary soul shall pine—
Oh! years of hope deferr'd were paid by one fond glance of thine!

"Thou'lt meet me with that radiant look when thou comest from the chase—
For me, for me, in festal halls it shall kindle o'er thy face!
Thou'lt reck no more though beauty's gift mine aspect may not bless;
In thy kind eyes, this deep, deep love shall give me loveliness.

"But wake! my heart within me burns, yet once more to rejoice
In the sound to which it ever leap'd, the music of thy voice.
Awake! I sit in solitude, that thy first look and tone,
And the gladness of thine opening eyes, may all be mine alone."

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In the still chambers of the dust, thus pour'd forth
day by day,
The passion of that loving dream from a troubled
soul found way,
Until the shadows of the grave had swept o'er every
grace,
Left midst the awfulness of death on the princely
form and face.

And slowly broke the fearful truth upon the watcher's
breast,
And they bore away the royal dead with requiems
to his rest,
With banners and with knightly plumes all waving
in the wind—
But a woman's broken heart was left in its lone
despair behind.

THE AMERICAN FOREST GIRL.

"A fearful gift upon thy heart is laid,
Woman!—a power to suffer and to love;
Therefore thou so canst pity."

Wildly and mournfully the Indian drum
On the deep hush of moonlight forests broke—
"Sing us a death-song, for thine hour is come"—
So the red warriors to their captive spoke.
Still, and amidst those dusky forms alone,
A youth, a fair-hair'd youth of England stood,
Like a king's son; though from his cheek had
flown
The mantling crimson of the island blood,

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And his press'd lips look'd marble. Fiercely bright
And high around him blazed the fires of night,
Rocking beneath the cedars to and fro,
As the wind pass'd, and with a fitful glow
Lighting the victim's face: but who could tell
Of what within his secret heart befell,
Known but to heaven that hour? Perchance a thought
Of his far home then so intensely wrought,
That its full image, pictured to his eye
On the dark ground of mortal agony,
Rose clear as day!—and he might *see* the band
Of his young sisters wandering hand in hand,
Where the laburnums droop'd; or haply binding
The jasmine up the door's low pillars winding;
Or, as day closed upon their gentle mirth,
Gathering, with braided hair, around the hearth,
Where sat their mother; and that mother's face
Its grave sweet smile yet wearing in the place
Where so it ever smiled! Perchance the prayer
Learn'd at her knee came back on his despair;
The blessing from her voice, the very tone
Of her "*Good-night*" might breathe from boyhood gone!
—He started and look'd up: thick cypress boughs,
Full of strange sound, waved o'er him, darkly red
In the broad stormy firelight; savage brows,
With tall plumes crested and wild hues o'erspread,
Girt him like feverish phantoms; and pale stars
Look'd through the branches as through dungeon bars,

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Shedding no hope. He knew, he felt his doom—
Oh! what a tale to shadow with its gloom
That happy hall in England. Idle fear!
Would the winds tell it? Who might dream or hear
The secret of the forests? To the stake
They bound him; and that proud young soldier strove
His father's spirit in his breast to wake,
Trusting to die in silence! He, the love
Of many hearts!—the fondly rear'd—the fair,
Gladdening all eyes to see! And fetter'd there
He stood beside his death-pyre, and the brand
Flamed up to light it in the chieftain's hand.
He thought upon his God. Hush! hark! a cry
Breaks on the stern and dread solemnity—
A step hath pierced the ring! Who dares intrude
On the dark hunters in their vengeful mood?
A girl—a young slight girl—a fawn-like child
Of green savannas and the leafy wild,
Springing unmark'd till then, as some lone flower,
Happy because the sunshine is its dower;
Yet one that knew how early tears are shed,
For *hers* had mourn'd a playmate-brother dead.

She had sat gazing on the victim long,
Until the pity of her soul grew strong;
And, by its passion's deepening fervour sway'd,
Even to the stake she rush'd, and gently laid
His bright head on her bosom, and around
His form her slender arms to shield it wound
Like close Liannes; then raised her glittering eye,
And clear-toned voice, that said, "He shall not die!"

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" He shall not die !"—the gloomy forest thrill'd
To that sweet sound. A sudden wonder fell
On the fierce throng; and heart and hand were still'd,
Struck down as by the whisper of a spell.
They gazed: their dark souls bow'd before the maid,
She of the dancing step in wood and glade !
And, as her cheek flush'd through its olive hue,
As her black tresses to the night-wind flew,
Something o'ermaster'd them from that young mien—
Something of heaven in silence felt and seen;
And seeming, to their childlike faith, a token
That the Great Spirit by her voice had spoken.

They loosed the bonds that held their captive's breath;
From his pale lips they took the cup of death;
They quench'd the brand beneath the cypress tree:
" Away," they cried, "young stranger, thou art free !"

COSTANZA.

"Art thou then desolate?
Of friends, of hopes forsaken? Come to me!
I am thine own. Have trusted hearts proved false?
Flatterers deceived thee? Wanderer, come to me!
Why didst thou ever leave me? Know'st thou all
I would have borne, and call'd it joy to bear,
For thy sake? Know'st thou that thy voice hath power
To shake me with a thrill of happiness
By one kind tone?—to fill mine eyes with tears
Of yearning love? And thou—oh! thou didst throw
That crush'd affection back upon my heart;
Yet come to me!—it died not."

She knelt in prayer. A stream of sunset fell
Through the stain'd window of her lonely cell,

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And with its rich, deep, melancholy glow,
Flushing her cheek and pale Madonna brow,
While o'er her long hair's flowing jet it threw
Bright waves of gold—the autumn forest's hue—
Seem'd all a vision's mist of glory, spread
By painting's touch around some holy head,
Virgin's or fairest martyr's. In her eye
Which glanced as dark clear water to the sky,
What solemn fervour lived! And yet what woe,
Lay like some buried thing, still seen below
The glassy tide! Oh! he that could reveal
What life had taught that chasten'd heart to feel,
Might speak indeed of woman's blighted years,
And wasted love, and vainly bitter tears!
But she had told her griefs to heaven alone,
And of the gentle saint no more was known,
Than that she fled the world's cold breath, and made
A temple of the pine and chestnut shade,
Filling its depths with soul, whene'er her hymn
Rose through each murmur of the green, and dim,
And ancient solitude; where hidden streams
Went moaning through the grass, like sounds in dreams—
Music for weary hearts! 'Midst leaves and flowers
She dwelt, and knew all secrets of their powers,
All nature's balms, wherewith her gliding tread
To the sick peasant on his lowly bed
Came and brought hope! while scarce of mortal birth
He deem'd the pale fair form that held on earth
Communion but with grief.

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Ere long, a cell,
A rock-hewn chapel rose, a cross of stone
Gleam'd through the dark trees o'er a sparkling well;
And a sweet voice, of rich yet mournful tone,
Told the Calabrian wilds that duly there
Costanza lifted her sad heart in prayer.
And now 'twas prayer's own hour. That voice again
Through the dim foliage sent its heavenly strain,
That made the cypress quiver where it stood,
In day's last crimson soaring from the wood
Like spiry flame. But as the bright sun set,
Other and wilder sounds in tumult met
The floating song. Strange sounds!—the trumpet's peal,
Made hollow by the rocks; the clash of steel;
The rallying war-cry. In the mountain pass
There had been combat; blood was on the grass,
Banners had strewn the waters; chiefs lay dying,
And the pine branches crash'd before the flying.

And all was changed within the still retreat,
Costanza's home: there enter'd hurrying feet,
Dark looks of shame and sorrow—mail-clad men,
Stern fugitives from that wild battle-glen,
Scaring the ringdoves from the porch roof, bore
A wounded warrior in. The rocky floor
Gave back deep echoes to his clanging sword,
As there they laid their leader, and implored
The sweet saint's prayers to heal him: then for flight,
Through the wide forest and the mantling night,
Sped breathlessly again. They pass'd; but h
The stateliest of a host—alas! to see

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What mother's eyes have watch'd in rosy sleep,
Till joy, for very fulness, turn'd to weep,
Thus changed!—a fearful thing! His golden crest
Was shiver'd, and the bright scarf on his breast—
Some costly love-gift—rent: but what of these?
There were the clustering raven locks—the breeze,
As it came in through lime and myrtle flowers,
Might scarcely lift them; steep'd in bloody showers,
So heavily upon the pallid clay
Of the damp cheek they hung. The eyes' dark ray,
Where was it? And the lips!—they gasp'd apart,
With their light curve, as from the chisel's art,
Still proudly beautiful! but that white hue—
Was it not death's?—that stillness—that cold dew
On the scarr'd forehead? No! his spirit broke
From its deep trance ere long, yet but awoke
To wander in wild dreams; and there he lay,
By the fierce fever as a green reed shaken,
The haughty chief of thousands—the forsaken
Of all save one. *She* fled not. Day by day—
Such hours are woman's birthright—she, unknown,
Kept watch beside him, fearless and alone;
Binding his wounds, and oft in silence laving
His brow with tears that mourn'd the strong man's raving.
He felt them not, nor mark'd the light veil'd form
Still hovering nigh! yet sometimes, when that storm
Of frenzy sank, her voice, in tones as low
As a young mother's by the cradle singing,
Would soothe him with sweet *aves*, gently bringing

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Moments of slumber, when the fiery glow
Ebb'd from his hollow cheek.

At last faint gleams
Of memory dawn'd upon the cloud of dreams,
And feebly lifting, as a child, his head,
And gazing round him from his leafy bed,
He murmur'd forth, "Where am I? What soft strain
Pass'd like a breeze across my burning brain?
Back from my youth it floated, with a tone
Of life's first music, and a thought of one—
Where is she now? and where the gauds of pride,
Whose hollow splendour lured me from her side?
All lost!—and this is death!—I *cannot* die
Without forgiveness from that mournful eye!
Away! the earth hath lost her. Was she born
To brook abandonment, to strive with scorn?
My first, my holiest love!—her broken heart
Lies low, and I—unpardon'd I depart."

But then Costanza raised the shadowy veil
From her dark locks and features brightly pale,
And stood before him with a smile—oh! ne'er
Did aught that *smiled* so much of sadness wear—
And said, "Cesario! look on me; I live
To say my heart hath bled, and can forgive.
I loved thee with such worship, such deep trust,
As should be heaven's alone—and heaven is just!
I bless thee—be at peace!"

But o'er his frame
Too fast the strong tide rush'd—the sudden shame,

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The joy, th' amaze! He bow'd his head—it fell
On the wrong'd bosom which had loved so well;
And love, still perfect, gave him refuge there—
His last faint breath just waved her floating hair.

MADELINE.

A DOMESTIC TALE.

"Who should it be?—Where shouldst thou look for kindness?
When we are sick, where can we turn for succour;
When we are wretched, where can we complain;
And when the world looks cold and surly on us,
Where can we go to meet a warmer eye
With such sure confidence as to a mother?"

JOANNA BAILLIE.

"My child, my child, thou leavest me! I shall hear
The gentle voice no more that blest mine ear
With its first utterance: I shall miss the sound
Of thy light step amidst the flowers around,
And thy soft-breathing hymn at twilight's close,
And thy 'Good-night' at parting for repose.
Under the vine-leaves I shall sit alone,
And the low breeze will have a mournful tone
Amidst their tendrils, while I think of thee,
My child! and thou, along the moonlit sea,
With a soft sadness haply in thy glance,
Shalt watch thine own, thy pleasant land of France,
Fading to air. Yet blessings with thee go!
Love guard thee, gentlest! and the exile's woe
From thy young heart be far! And sorrow not

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For me, sweet daughter! in my lonely lot,
God shall be with me. Now, farewell! farewell!
Thou that hast been what words may never tell
Unto thy mother's bosom, since the days
When thou wert pillow'd there, and wont to raise
In sudden laughter thence thy loving eye
That still sought mine: these moments are gone by—
Thou too must go, my flower! Yet with thee dwell
The peace of God! One, one more gaze: farewell!"

This was a mother's parting with her child—
A young meek bride, on whom fair fortune smiled,
And woo'd her with a voice of love away
From childhood's home: yet there, with fond delay,
She linger'd on the threshold, heard the note
Of her caged bird through trellis'd rose-leaves float,
And fell upon her mother's neck and wept,
Whilst old remembrances, that long had slept,
Gush'd o'er her soul, and many a vanish'd day,
As in one picture traced, before her lay.

But the farewell was said; and on the deep,
When its breast heaved in sunset's golden sleep,
With a calm'd heart, young Madeline ere long
Pour'd forth her own sweet, solemn vesper-song,
Breathing of home. Through stillness heard afar,
And duly rising with the first pale star,
That voice was on the waters; till at last
The sounding ocean solitudes were pass'd,
And the bright land was reach'd, the youthful world
That glows along the West: the sails were furl'd
In its clear sunshine, and the gentle bride

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Look'd on the home that promised hearts untried
A bower of bliss to come. Alas! we trace
The map of our own paths, and long ere years
With their dull steps the brilliant lines efface,
On sweeps the storm, and blots them out with tears!
That home was darken'd soon: the summer breeze
Welcomed with death the wanderers from the seas:
Death unto one, and anguish—how forlorn!
To her that, widow'd in her marriage morn,
Sat in her voiceless dwelling, whence with him,
Her bosom's first beloved, her friend and guide,
Joy had gone forth, and left the green earth dim,
As from the sun shut out on every side
By the close veil of misery. Oh! but ill,
When with rich hopes o'erfraught, the young high heart
Bears its first blow! it knows not yet the part
Which life will teach—to suffer and be still,
And with submissive love to count the flowers
Which yet are spared, and through the future hours
To send no busy dream! *She* had not learn'd
Of sorrow till that hour, and therefore turn'd
In weariness from life. Then came th' unrest,
The heart-sick yearning of the exile's breast,
The haunting sounds of voices far away,
And household steps: until at last she lay
On her lone couch of sickness, lost in dreams
Of the gay vineyards and blue-rushing streams
In her own sunny land; and murmuring oft
Familiar names, in accents wild yet soft,
To strangers round that bed, who knew not aught
Of the deep spells wherewith each word was fraught.

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To strangers? Oh! could strangers raise the head
Gently as *hers* was raised? Did strangers shed
The kindly tears which bathed that feverish brow
And wasted cheek with half-unconscious flow?
Something was there that, through the lingering night,
Outwatches patiently the taper's light—
Something that faints not through the day's distress,
That fears not toil, that knows not weariness—
Love, true and perfect love! Whence came that power,
Uprearing through the storm the drooping flower?
Whence?—who can ask? The wild delirium pass'd,
And from her eyes the spirit look'd at last
Into her *mother's* face, and wakening knew
The brow's calm grace, the hair's dear silvery hue,
The kind sweet smile of old!—and had *she* come,
Thus in life's evening from her distant home,
To save her child? Even so—nor yet in vain;
In that young heart a light sprang up again,
And lovely still, with so much love to give,
Seem'd this fair world, though faded; still to live
Was not to pine forsaken. On the breast
That rock'd her childhood, sinking in soft rest,
"Sweet mother! gentlest mother! can it be?"
The lorn one cried, "and do I look on thee?
Take back thy wanderer from this fatal shore,
Peace shall be ours beneath our vines once more."

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THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA'S TOMB.

["This tomb is in the garden of Charlottenburg, near Berlin. It was not without surprise that I came suddenly, among trees, upon a fair white Doric temple. I might and should have deemed it a mere adornment of the grounds, but the cypress and the willow declare it a habitation of the dead. Upon a sarcophagus of white marble lay a sheet, and the outline of the human form was plainly visible beneath its folds. The person with me reverently turned it back, and displayed the statue of his queen. It is a portrait statue recumbent, said to be a perfect resemblance—not as in death, but when she lived to bless and be blessed. Nothing can be more calm and kind than the expression of her features. The hands are folded on the bosom; the limbs are sufficiently crossed to show the repose of life. Here the King brings her children annually, to offer garlands at her grave. These hang in withered mournfulness above this living image of their departed mother."—SHERER'S *Notes and Reflections during a Ramble in Germany.*]

> "In sweet pride upon that insult keen
> She smiled; then drooping mute and brokenhearted,
> To the cold comfort of the grave departed."
>
> MILMAN.

IT stands where northern willows weep,
A temple fair and lone;
Soft shadows o'er its marble sweep
From cypress branches thrown;
While silently around it spread,
Thou feel'st the presence of the dead.

And what within is richly shrined?
A sculptured woman's form,

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Lovely, in perfect rest reclined,
As one beyond the storm:
Yet not of death, but slumber, lies
The solemn sweetness on those eyes.

The folded hands, the calm pure face,
The mantle's quiet flow,
The gentle yet majestic grace
Throned on the matron brow;
These, in that scene of tender gloom,
With a still glory robe the tomb.

There stands an eagle, at the feet
Of the fair image wrought;
A kingly emblem—nor unmeet
To wake yet deeper thought:
She whose high heart finds rest below,
Was royal in her birth and woe.

There are pale garlands hung above,
Of dying scent and hue;
She was a mother—in her love
How sorrowfully true!
Oh! hallow'd long be every leaf,
The record of her children's grief!

She saw their birthright's warrior-crown
Of olden glory spoil'd,
The standard of their sires borne down,
The shield's bright blazon soil'd:
She met the tempest, meekly brave,
Then turn'd o'erwearied to the grave.

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She slumber'd: but it came—it came,
Her land's redeeming hour,
With the glad shout, and signal flame
Sent on from tower to tower!
Fast through the realm a spirit moved—
'Twas hers, the lofty and the loved.

Then was her name a note that rung
To rouse bold hearts from sleep;
Her memory, as a banner flung
Forth by the Baltic deep;
Her grief, a bitter vial pour'd
To sanctify th' avenger's sword.

And the crown'd eagle spread again
His pinion to the sun;
And the strong land shook off its chain—
So was the triumph won!
But woe for earth, where sorrow's tone
Still blends with victory's!—*She* was gone!

THE MEMORIAL PILLAR.

[On the road-side, between Penrith and Appleby, stands a small pillar, with this inscription:—"This pillar was erected in the year 1656, by Ann, Countess-Dowager of Pembroke, for a memorial of her last parting, in this place, with her good and pious mother, Margaret, Countess-Dowager of Cumberland, on the 2d April 1616."—See notes to the *Pleasures of Memory*.]

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"Hast thou through Eden's wild-wood vales, pursued
Each mountain scene magnificently rude,
Nor with attention's lifted eye revered
That modest stone, by pious Pembroke rear'd,
Which still records, beyond the pencil's power,
The silent sorrows of a parting hour?"

ROGERS.

MOTHER and child! whose blending tears
Have sanctified the place,
Where, to the love of many years,
Was given one last embrace—
Oh! ye have shrined a spell of power
Deep in your record of that hour!

A spell to waken solemn thought—
A still, small under tone,
That calls back days of childhood, fraught
With many a treasure gone;
And smites, perchance, the hidden source,
Though long untroubled—of remorse.

For who, that gazes on the stone
Which marks your parting spot,
Who but a mother's love hath known—
The *one* love changing not?
Alas! and haply learn'd its worth
First with the sound of "Earth to earth!"

But thou, high-hearted daughter! thou,
O'er whose bright honour'd head
Blessings and tears of holiest flow
E'en here were fondly shed—
Thou from the passion of thy grief,
In its full burst, couldst draw relief.

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For, oh! though painful be th' excess,
The might wherewith it swells,
In nature's fount no bitterness
Of nature's mingling dwells;
And thou hadst not, by wrong or pride,
Poison'd the free and healthful tide.

But didst thou meet the face no more
Which thy young heart first knew?
And all—was all in this world o'er
With ties thus close and true?
It was! On earth no other eye
Could give thee back thine infancy.

No other voice could pierce the maze
Where, deep within thy breast,
The sounds and dreams of other days
With memory lay at rest;
No other smile to thee could bring
A gladdening, like the breath of spring.

Yet, while thy place of weeping still
Its lone memorial keeps,
While on thy name, midst wood and hill,
The quiet sunshine sleeps,
And touches, in each graven line,
Of reverential thought a sign;

Can I, while yet these tokens wear
The impress of the dead,
Think of the love embodied there
As of a vision fled?

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A perish'd thing, the joy and flower
And glory of one earthly hour?

Not so!—I will not bow me so
To thoughts that breathe despair!
A loftier faith we need below,
Life's farewell words to bear.
Mother and child!—your tears are past—
Surely your hearts have met at last.

THE GRAVE OF A POETESS.*

"Ne me plaignez pas—si vous saviez
Combien de peines ce tombeau m'a epargnées!"

I stood beside thy lowly grave;
Spring odours breathed around,
And music, in the river wave,
Pass'd with a lulling sound.

All happy things that love the sun
In the bright air glanced by,
And a glad murmur seem'd to run
Through the soft azure sky.

* "Extrinsic interest has lately attached to the fine scenery of Woodstock, near Kilkenny, on account of its having been the last residence of the author of *Psyche*. Her grave is one of many in the churchyard of the village. The river runs smoothly by. The ruins of an ancient abbey, that have been partially converted into a church, reverently throw their mantle of tender shadow over it."—*Tales by the O'Hara Family.*

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Fresh leaves were on the ivy bough
That fringed the ruins near;
Young voices were abroad—but thou
Their sweetness couldst not hear.

And mournful grew my heart for thee!
Thou in whose woman's mind
The ray that brightens earth and sea,
The light of song, was shrined.

Mournful, that thou wert slumbering low,
With a dread curtain drawn
Between thee and the golden glow
Of this world's vernal dawn.

Parted from all the song and bloom
Thou wouldst have loved so well,
To thee the sunshine round thy tomb
Was but a broken spell.

The bird, the insect on the wing,
In their bright reckless play,
Might feel the flush and life of spring—
And thou wert pass'd away.

But then, e'en then, a nobler thought
O'er my vain sadness came;
Th' immortal spirit woke, and wrought
Within my thrilling frame.

Surely on lovelier things, I said,
Thou must have look'd ere now,

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Than all that round our pathway shed
Odours and hues below.

The shadows of the tomb are here,
Yet beautiful is earth!
What see'st thou, then, where no dim fear,
No haunting dream hath birth?

Here a vain love to passing flowers
Thou gavest; but where thou art,
The sway is not with changeful hours—
There love and death must part.

Thou hast left sorrow in thy song,
A voice not loud but deep!
The glorious bowers of earth among,
How often didst thou weep?

Where couldst thou fix on mortal ground
Thy tender thoughts and high?—
Now peace the woman's heart hath found,
And joy the poet's eye.

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NOTES.

Note 1, page 139, lines 19 and 20.

When darkness, from the vainly-doting sight,
Covers its beautiful!

"Wheresoever you are, or in what state soever you be, it sufficeth me you are mine. *Rachel wept and would not be comforted, because her children were no more.* And that, indeed, is the remediless sorrow, and none else!"—From a letter of Arabella Stuart's to her husband; (see *Curiosities of Literature.*)

Note 2, page 145, lines 7 and 8.

Death!—what is death, a lock'd and treasured thing,
Guarded by swords of fire?

"And if you remember of old, *I dare die.*—Consider what the world would conceive if I should be violently enforced to do it."—*Fragments of Letters of Arabella Stuart.*

Note 3, page 149, lines 3 and 4.

And her lovely thoughts from their cells found way
In the sudden flow of a plaintive lay.

A Greek bride, on leaving her father's house, takes leave of her friends and relatives frequently in extemporaneous verse.—See FAURIEL'S *Chants Populaires de la Grèce Moderne.*

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Note 4, page 167, motto.

And loved when they should hate—like thee, Imelda!

The tale of Imelda is related in Sismondi's *Histoire des Republiques Italiennes*, vol. iii. p. 443.

Note 5, page 193, line 2.

Father of ancient waters, roll!

" Father of waters," the Indian name for the Mississippi.

Note 6, page 197, line 27.

And to the Fairy's Fountain in the glade.

A beautiful fountain near Domremi, believed to be haunted by fairies, and a favourite resort of Jeanne d'Arc in her childhood.

Note 7, page 199, lines 9 and 10.

But loveliest far amidst the revel's pride
Was one—the lady from the Danube side.

The Princess Pauline Schwartzenberg. The story of her fate is beautifully related in *L'Allemagne*, vol. iii. p. 336.

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MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

THE HOMES OF ENGLAND.

"Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land?"

Marmion.

THE stately homes of England,
How beautiful they stand,
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleasant land!
The deer across their greensward bound,
Through shade and sunny gleam;
And the swan glides past them with the sound
Of some rejoicing stream.

The merry homes of England!
Around their hearths by night,
What gladsome looks of household love
Meet in the ruddy light!
There woman's voice flows forth in song,
Or childhood's tale is told,
Or lips move tunefully along
Some glorious page of old.

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The blessed homes of England!
How softly on their bowers
Is laid the holy quietness
That breathes from Sabbath hours!
Solemn, yet sweet, the church-bell's chime
Floats through their woods at morn;
All other sounds, in that still time,
Of breeze and leaf are born.

The cottage homes of England!
By thousands on her plains,
They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,
And round the hamlet fanes.
Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
Each from its nook of leaves;
And fearless there the lowly sleep,
As the bird beneath their eaves.

The free, fair homes of England!
Long, long, in hut and hall,
May hearts of native proof be rear'd
To guard each hallow'd wall!
And green for ever be the groves,
And bright the flowery sod,
Where first the child's glad spirit loves
Its country and its God!

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THE SICILIAN CAPTIVE.

"I have dreamt thou wert
A captive in thy hopelessness; afar
From the sweet home of thy young infancy,
Whose image unto thee is as a dream
Of fire and slaughter; I can see thee wasting,
Sick for thy native air."

L. E. L.

THE champions had come from their fields of war,
Over the crests of the billows far;
They had brought back the spoils of a hundred shores,
Where the deep had foam'd to their flashing oars.

They sat at their feast round the Norse king's board;
By the glare of the torch-light the mead was pour'd;
The hearth was heap'd with the pine-boughs high,
And it flung a red radiance on shields thrown by.

The Scalds had chanted in Runic rhyme
Their songs of the sword and the olden time;
And a solemn thrill, as the harp-chords rung,
Had breathed from the walls where the bright spears hung.

But the swell was gone from the quivering string,
They had summon'd a softer voice to sing;
And a captive girl, at the warriors' call,
Stood forth in the midst of that frowning hall.

Lonely she stood,—in her mournful eyes
Lay the clear midnight of southern skies;

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And the drooping fringe of their lashes low,
Half-veil'd a depth of unfathom'd woe.

Stately she stood—though her fragile frame
Seem'd struck with the blight of some inward flame,
And her proud pale brow had a shade of scorn,
Under the waves of her dark hair worn.

And a deep flush pass'd, like a crimson haze,
O'er her marble cheek by the pine-fire's blaze—
No soft hue caught from the south wind's breath,
But a token of fever at strife with death.

She had been torn from her home away,
With her long locks crown'd for her bridal-day,
And brought to die of the burning dreams
That haunt the exile by foreign streams.

They bade her sing of her distant land—
She held its lyre with a trembling hand,
Till the spirit its blue skies had given her woke,
And the stream of her voice into music broke.

Faint was the strain, in its first wild flow—
Troubled its murmur, and sad and low;
But it swell'd into deeper power ere long,
As the breeze that swept o'er her soul grew strong.

"They bid me sing of thee, mine own, my sunny land! of thee!
Am I not parted from thy shores by the mournful-sounding sea?

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Doth not thy shadow wrap my soul? in silence let
me die,
In a voiceless dream of thy silvery founts, and thy
pure, deep sapphire sky:
How should thy lyre give *here* its wealth of buried
sweetness forth—
Its tones of summer's breathings born, to the wild
winds of the north?

"Yet thus it shall be once, once more! My spirit
shall awake,
And through the mists of death shine out, my
country, for thy sake!
That I may make *thee* known, with all the beauty
and the light,
And the glory never more to bless thy daughter's
yearning sight!
Thy woods shall whisper in my song, thy bright
streams warble by,
Thy soul flow o'er my lips again—yet once, my Sicily!

"There are blue heavens—far hence, far hence!
but, oh! their glorious blue!
Its very night is beautiful with the hyacinth's deep
hue!
It is above my own fair land, and round my laughing
home,
And arching o'er my vintage hills, they hang their
cloudless dome;
And making all the waves as gems, that melt along
the shore,
And steeping happy hearts in joy—that now is mine
no more.

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"And there are haunts in that green land—oh! who may dream or tell
Of all the shaded loveliness it hides in grot and dell!
By fountains flinging rainbow-spray on dark and glossy leaves,
And bowers wherein the forest-dove her nest untroubled weaves;
The myrtle dwells there, sending round the richness of its breath,
And the violets gleam like amethysts from the dewy moss beneath.

"And there are floating sounds that fill the skies through night and day—
Sweet sounds! the soul to hear them faints in dreams of heaven away;
They wander through the olive woods, and o'er the shining seas—
They mingle with the orange scents that load the sleepy breeze;
Lute, voice, and bird are blending there,—it were a bliss to die,
As dies a leaf, thy groves among, my flowery Sicily!

"*I* may not thus depart—farewell! Yet no, my country! no!
Is not love stronger than the grave? I feel it must be so!
My fleeting spirit shall o'ersweep the mountains and the main,
And in thy tender starlight rove, and through thy woods again.

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Its passion deepens—it prevails!—I break my chain—
I come
To dwell a viewless thing, yet blest—in thy sweet
air, my home!"

And her pale arms dropp'd the ringing lyre—
There came a mist o'er her eye's wild fire—
And her dark rich tresses in many a fold,
Loosed from their braids, down her bosom roll'd.

For her head sank back on the rugged wall—
A silence fell o'er the warrior's hall;
She had pour'd out her soul with her song's last tone:
The lyre was broken, the minstrel gone!

IVAN THE CZAR.

["Ivan le Terrible, étant dejà devenu vieux, assiégait Novgorod. Les Boyards, le voyant affoibli, lui démandèrent s'il ne voulait pas donner le commandement de l'assaut à son fils. Sa fureur fut si grande à cette proposition, que rien ne pût l'appaiser: son fils se prosterna à ses pieds; il le repoussa avec un coup d'une telle violence, que deux jours après le malheureux en mourut. Le père, alors au désespoir, devint indifférent à la guerre comme au pouvoir, et ne survécut que peu de mois à son fils."—*Dix Annés d'Exil*, par MADAME DE STAEL.]

"Gieb diesen Todten mir heraus. Ich muss
Ihn wieder haben! * * *
* * Trostlose allmacht,
Die nicht einmal in Gräber ihren arm
Verlängern, eine kleine Ubereilung
Mit Menschenleben nicht verbessern kann!"
SCHILLER.

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He sat in silence on the ground,
The old and haughty Czar,
Lonely, though princes girt him round,
And leaders of the war;
He had cast his jewell'd sabre,
That many a field had won,
To the earth beside his youthful dead—
His fair and first-born son.

With a robe of ermine for its bed,
Was laid that form of clay,
Where the light a stormy sunset shed
Through the rich tent made way;
And a sad and solemn beauty
On the pallid face came down,
Which the lord of nations mutely watch'd,
In the dust, with his renown.

Low tones at last, of woe and fear,
From his full bosom broke—
A mournful thing it was to hear
How then the proud man spoke!
The voice that through the combat
Had shouted far and high,
Came forth in strange, dull, hollow tones,
Burden'd with agony.

"There is no crimson on thy cheek,
And on thy lip no breath;
I call thee, and thou dost not speak—
They tell me this is death!

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And fearful things are whispering
That I the deed have done—
For the honour of thy father's name,
Look up, look up, my son!

"Well might I know death's hue and mien—
But on *thine* aspect, boy!
What, till this moment, have I seen
Save pride and tameless joy?
Swiftest thou wert to battle,
And bravest there of all—
How could I think a warrior's frame
Thus like a flower should fall?

"I will not bear that still cold look—
Rise up, thou fierce and free!
Wake as the storm wakes! I will brook
All, save this calm, from thee!
Lift brightly up, and proudly,
Once more thy kindling eyes!
Hath my word lost its power on earth?
I say to thee, arise!

"Didst thou not know I loved thee well?
Thou didst not! and art gone,
In bitterness of soul, to dwell
Where man must dwell alone.
Come back, young fiery spirit!
If but one hour, to learn
The secrets of the folded heart
That seem'd to thee so stern.

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" Thou wert the first, the first, fair child
That in mine arms I press'd:
Thou wert the bright one, that hast smiled
Like summer on my breast!
I rear'd thee as an eagle,
To the chase thy steps I led,
I bore thee on my battle-horse,
I look upon thee—dead!

" Lay down my warlike banners here,
Never again to wave,
And bury my red sword and spear,
Chiefs! in my first-born's grave!
And leave me!—I have conquer'd,
I have slain—my work is done!
Whom have I slain?—ye answer not—
Thou too art mute, my son!"

And thus his wild lament was pour'd
Through the dark resounding night,
And the battle knew no more his sword,
Nor the foaming steed his might.
He heard strange voices moaning
In every wind that sigh'd;
From the searching stars of heaven he shrank—
Humbly the conqueror died.

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CAROLAN'S PROPHECY.*

" Thy cheek too swiftly flushes, o'er thine eye
The lights and shadows come and go too fast;
Thy tears gush forth too soon, and in thy voice
Are sounds of tenderness too passionate
For peace on earth: oh! therefore, child of song!
'Tis well thou shouldst depart."

A SOUND of music, from amidst the hills,
Came suddenly, and died; a fitful sound
Of mirth, soon lost in wail. Again it rose,
And sank in mournfulness. There sat a bard
By a blue stream of Erin, where it swept
Flashing through rock and wood: the sunset's light
Was on his wavy, silver-gleaming hair,
And the wind's whisper in the mountain ash,

* Founded on the following circumstance related in the *Percy Anecdotes* of imagination.

" It is somewhat remarkable that Carolan, the Irish bard, even in his gayest mood, never could compose a planxty for a Miss Brett, in the county of Sligo, whose father's house he frequented, and where he always met with a reception due to his exquisite taste and mental endowments. One day, after an unsuccessful attempt to compose something in a sprightly strain for this lady, he threw aside his harp with a mixture of rage and grief; and addressing himself in Irish to her mother, 'Madam,' said he, 'I have often, from my great respect to your family, attempted a planxty in order to celebrate your daughter's perfections, but to no purpose. Some evil genius hovers over me; there is not a string in my harp that does not vibrate a melancholy sound when I set about this task. I fear she is not doomed to remain long among us; nay,' said he emphatically, 'she will not survive twelve months.' The event verified the prediction, and the young lady died within the period limited by the unconsciously prophetic bard."

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Whose clusters droop'd above. His head was bow'd,
His hand was on his harp, yet thence its touch
Had drawn but broken strains; and many stood
Waiting around, in silent earnestness,
Th' unchaining of his soul, the gush of song—
Many and graceful forms!—yet one alone
Seem'd present to his dream; and she, indeed,
With her pale virgin brow, and changeful cheek,
And the clear starlight of her serious eyes,
Lovely amidst the flowing of dark locks
And pallid braiding flowers, was beautiful,
E'en painfully!—a creature to behold
With trembling midst our joy, lest aught unseen
Should waft the vision from us, leaving earth
Too dim without its brightness! Did such fear
O'ershadow in that hour the gifted one,
By his own rushing stream? Once more he gazed
Upon the radiant girl, and yet once more
From the deep chords his wandering hand brought out
A few short festive notes, an opening strain
Of bridal melody, soon dash'd with grief—
As if some wailing spirit in the strings
Met and o'ermaster'd him; but yielding then
To the strong prophet impulse, mournfully,
Like moaning waters o'er the harp he pour'd
The trouble of his haunted soul, and sang—

"Voice of the grave!
I hear thy thrilling call;
It comes in the dash of the foaming wave,
In the sere leaf's trembling fall!

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In the shiver of the tree,
I hear thee, O thou voice!
And I would thy warning were but for me,
That my spirit might rejoice.

"But thou art sent
For the sad earth's young and fair,
For the graceful heads that have not bent
To the wintry hand of care!
They hear the wind's low sigh,
And the river sweeping free,
And the green reeds murmuring heavily,
And the woods—but they hear not thee!

"Long have I striven
With my deep-foreboding soul,
But the full tide now its bounds hath riven,
And darkly on must roll.
There's a young brow smiling near,
With a bridal white rose wreath—
Unto *me* it smiles from a flowery bier,
Touch'd solemnly by death!

"Fair art thou, Morna!
The sadness of thine eye
Is beautiful as silvery clouds
On the dark blue summer sky!
And thy voice comes like the sound
Of a sweet and hidden rill,
That makes the dim woods tuneful round—
But soon it must be still!

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"Silence and dust
On thy sunny lips must lie—
Make not the strength of love thy trust,
A stronger yet is nigh!
No strain of festal flow
That my hand for thee hath tried,
But into dirge-notes wild and low
Its ringing tones have died.

"Young art thou, Morna!
Yet on thy gentle head,
Like heavy dew on the lily's leaves,
A spirit hath been shed!
And the glance is thine which sees
Through nature's awful heart—
But bright things go with the summer breeze,
And thou too must depart!

"Yet, shall I weep?
I know that in thy breast
There swells a fount of song too deep,
Too powerful for thy rest!
And the bitterness I know,
And the chill of this world's breath—
Go—all undimm'd in thy glory, go!
Young and crown'd bride of death!

"Take hence to heaven
Thy holy thoughts and bright,
And soaring hopes, that were not given
For the touch of mortal blight!

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Might we follow in thy track,
This parting should not be!
But the spring shall give us violets back,
And every flower but thee!"

There was a burst of tears around the bard:
All wept but one—and she serenely stood,
With her clear brow and dark religious eye
Raised to the first faint star above the hills,
And cloudless; though it might be that her cheek
Was paler than before. So Morna heard
The minstrel's prophecy.
And spring return'd,
Bringing the earth her lovely things again—
All, save the loveliest far! A voice, a smile,
A young sweet spirit gone.

THE LADY OF THE CASTLE.

FROM THE "PORTRAIT GALLERY," AN UNFINISHED POEM.

"If there be but one spot on thy name,
One eye thou fear'st to meet, one human voice
Whose tones thou shrink'st from—Woman! veil thy face,
And bow thy head—and die!"

THOU see'st her pictured with her shining hair,
(Famed were those tresses in Provençal song,)
Half braided, half o'er cheek and bosom fair
Let loose, and pouring sunny waves along
Her gorgeous vest. A child's light hand is roving
Midst the rich curls; and, oh! how meekly loving
Its earnest looks are lifted to the face
Which bends to meet its lip in laughing grace!

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Yet that bright lady's eye, methinks, hath less
Of deep, and still, and pensive tenderness,
Than might beseem a mother's; on her brow
Something too much there sits of native scorn,
And her smile kindles with a conscious glow,
As from the thought of sovereign beauty born.
These may be dreams—but how shall woman tell
Of woman's shame, and not with tears? She fell!
That mother left that child!—went hurrying by
Its cradle—haply not without a sigh,
Haply one moment o'er its rest serene
She hung. But no! it could not thus have been,
For *she went on!*—forsook her home, her hearth,
All pure affection, all sweet household mirth,
To live a gaudy and dishonour'd thing,
Sharing in guilt the splendours of a king.

Her lord, in very weariness of life,
Girt on his sword for scenes of distant strife.
He reck'd no more of glory: grief and shame
Crush'd out his fiery nature, and his name
Died silently. A shadow o'er his halls
Crept year by year: the minstrel pass'd their walls;
The warder's horn hung mute. Meantime the child
On whose first flowering thoughts no parent smiled,
A gentle girl, and yet deep-hearted, grew
Into sad youth; for well, too well, she knew
Her mother's tale! Its memory made the sky
Seem all too joyous for her shrinking eye;
Check'd on her lip the flow of song, which fain
Would there have linger'd; flush'd her cheek to pain,

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If met by sudden glance; and gave a tone
Of sorrow, as for something lovely gone,
E'en to the spring's glad voice. Her own was low
And plaintive. Oh! there lie such depths of woe
In a *young* blighted spirit! Manhood rears
A haughty brow, and age has done with tears;
But youth bows down to misery, in amaze
At the dark cloud o'ermantling its fresh days;—
And thus it was with her. A mournful sight
In one so fair—for she indeed was fair;
Not with her mother's dazzling eyes of light—
Hers were more shadowy, full of thought and prayer,
And with long lashes o'er a white-rose cheek
Drooping in gloom, yet tender still and meek,
Still that fond child's—and oh! the brow above
So pale and pure! so form'd for holy love
To gaze upon in silence!—But she felt
That love was not for her, though hearts would melt
Where'er she moved, and reverence mutely given
Went with her; and low prayers, that call'd on heaven
To bless the young Isaure.

One sunny morn
With alms before her castle gate she stood,
Midst peasant groups: when, breathless and o'erworn,
And shrouded in long weeds of widowhood,
A stranger through them broke. The orphan maid,
With her sweet voice and proffer'd hand of aid,
Turn'd to give welcome; but a wild sad look
Met hers—a gaze that all her spirit shook;

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And that pale woman, suddenly subdued
By some strong passion, in its gushing mood,
Knelt at her feet, and bathed them with such tears
As rain the hoarded agonies of years
From the heart's urn; and with her white lips
press'd
The ground they trod; then, burying in her vest
Her brow's deep flush, sobb'd out—"Oh undefiled!
I am thy mother—spurn me not, my child!"

Isaure had pray'd for that lost mother; wept
O'er her stain'd memory, while the happy slept
In the hush'd midnight; stood with mournful gaze
Before yon picture's smile of other days,
But never breathed in human ear the name
Which weigh'd her being to the earth with shame.
What marvel if the anguish, the surprise,
The dark remembrances, the alter'd guise,
Awhile o'erpower'd her? From the weeper's touch
She shrank—'twas but a moment—yet too much
For that all-humbled one; its mortal stroke
Came down like lightning, and her full heart broke
At once in silence. Heavily and prone
She sank, while o'er her castle's threshold stone,
Those long fair tresses—*they* still brightly wore
Their early pride, though bound with pearls no
more—
Bursting their fillet, in sad beauty roll'd,
And swept the dust with coils of wavy gold.

Her child bent o'er her—call'd her: 'twas too late—
Dead lay the wanderer at her own proud gate!

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The joy of courts, the star of knight and bard—
How didst thou fall, O bright-hair'd Ermengarde!

THE MOURNER FOR THE BARMECIDES.

> "O good old man! how well in thee appears
> The constant service of the antique world!
> Thou art not for the fashion of these times."
> *As You Like It.*

FALLEN was the house of Giafar; and its name,
The high romantic name of Barmecide,
A sound forbidden on its own bright shores,
By the swift Tigris' wave. Stern Haroun's wrath,
Sweeping the mighty with their fame away,
Had so pass'd sentence: but man's chainless heart
Hides that within its depths which never yet
Th' oppressor's thought could reach.

'Twas desolate
Where Giafar's halls, beneath the burning sun,
Spread out in ruin lay. The songs had ceased;
The lights, the perfumes, and the genii tales
Had ceased; the guests were gone. Yet still one voice
Was there—the fountain's; through those eastern courts,
Over the broken marble and the grass,
Its low clear music shedding mournfully.

And still another voice! An agèd man,
Yet with a dark and fervent eye beneath

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His silvery hair, came day by day, and sate
On a white column's fragment; and drew forth,
From the forsaken walls and dim arcades,
A tone that shook them with its answering thrill,
To his deep accents. Many a glorious tale
He told that sad yet stately solitude,
Pouring his memory's fulness o'er its gloom,
Like waters in the waste; and calling up,
By song or high recital of their deeds,
Bright solemn shadows of its vanish'd race
To people their own halls: with these alone,
In all this rich and breathing world, his thoughts
Held still unbroken converse. He had been
Rear'd in this lordly dwelling, and was now
The ivy of its ruins, unto which
His fading life seem'd bound. Day roll'd on day,
And from that scene the loneliness was fled;
For crowds around the grey-hair'd chronicler
Met as men meet, within whose anxious hearts
Fear with deep feeling strives; till, as a breeze
Wanders through forest branches, and is met
By one quick sound and shiver of the leaves,
The spirit of his passionate lament,
As through their stricken souls it pass'd, awoke
One echoing murmur. But this might not be
Under a despot's rule, and, summon'd thence,
The dreamer stood before the Caliph's throne:
Sentenced to death he stood, and deeply pale,
And with his white lips rigidly compress'd;
Till, in submissive tones, he ask'd to speak
Once more, ere thrust from earth's fair sunshine forth.

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Was it to sue for grace? His burning heart
Sprang, with a sudden lightning, to his eye,
And he was changed!—and thus, in rapid words,
Th' o'ermastering thoughts, more strong than death, found way:—

"And shall I not rejoice to go, when the noble and the brave,
With the glory on their brows, are gone before me to the grave?
What is there left to look on now, what brightness in the land?
I hold in scorn the faded world, that wants their princely band!

"My chiefs! my chiefs! the old man comes that in your halls was nursed—
That follow'd you to many a fight, where flash'd your sabres first—
That bore your children in his arms, your name upon his heart:—
Oh! must the music of that name with him from earth depart?

"It shall not be! A thousand tongues, though human voice were still,
With that high sound the living air triumphantly shall fill;
The wind's free flight shall bear it on as wandering seeds are sown,
And the starry midnight whisper it, with a deep and thrilling tone.

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"For it is not as a flower whose scent with the dropping leaves expires,
And it is not as a household lamp, that a breath should quench its fires;
It is written on our battle-fields with the writing of the sword,
It hath left upon our desert sands a light in blessings pour'd.

"The founts, the many gushing founts which to the wild ye gave,
Of you, my chiefs! shall sing aloud, as they pour a joyous wave;
And the groves, with whose deep lovely gloom ye hung the pilgrim's way,
Shall send from all their sighing leaves your praises on the day.

"The very walls your bounty rear'd for the stranger's homeless head,
Shall find a murmur to record your tale, my glorious dead!
Though the grass be where ye feasted once, where lute and cittern rung,
And the serpent in your palaces lie coil'd amidst its young.

"It is enough! Mine eye no more of joy or splendour sees—
I leave your name in lofty faith to the skies and to the breeze!

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I go, since earth her flower hath lost, to join the
bright and fair,
And call the grave a kingly house, for ye, my chiefs!
are there."

But while the old man sang, a mist of tears
O'er Haroun's eyes had gather'd, and a thought—
Oh! many a sudden and remorseful thought—
Of his youth's once-loved friends, the martyr'd race,
O'erflow'd his softening heart. "Live! live!" he
cried,
"Thou faithful unto death! Live on, and still
Speak of thy lords—they *were* a princely band!"

THE SPANISH CHAPEL.*

"Weep not for those whom the veil of the tomb,
In life's early morning, hath hid from our eyes,
Ere sin threw a veil o'er the spirit's young bloom,
Or earth had profaned what was born for the skies."
MOORE.

I MADE a mountain brook my guide
Through a wild Spanish glen,
And wander'd on its grassy side,
Far from the homes of men.

It lured me with a singing tone,
And many a sunny glance,
To a green spot of beauty lone,
A haunt for old romance.

* Suggested by a scene beautifully described in the *Recollections of the Peninsula.*

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A dim and deeply bosom'd grove
Of many an agèd tree,
Such as the shadowy violets love,
The fawn and forest bee.

The darkness of the chestnut-bough
There on the waters lay,
The bright stream reverently below
Check'd its exulting play;

And bore a music all subdued,
And led a silvery sheen
On through the breathing solitude
Of that rich leafy scene.

For something viewlessly around
Of solemn influence dwelt,
In the soft gloom and whispery sound,
Not to be told, but felt;

While sending forth a quiet gleam
Across the wood's repose,
And o'er the twilight of the stream,
A lowly chapel rose.

A pathway to that still retreat
Through many a myrtle wound,
And there a sight—how strangely sweet!
My steps in wonder bound.

For on a brilliant bed of flowers,
E'en at the threshold made,

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As if to sleep through sultry hours,
A young fair child was laid.

To sleep?—oh! ne'er on childhood's eye
And silken lashes press'd,
Did the warm *living* slumber lie
With such a weight of rest!

Yet still a tender crimson glow
Its cheeks' pure marble dyed—
'Twas but the light's faint streaming flow
Through roses heap'd beside.

I stoop'd—the smooth round arm was chill,
The soft lips' breath was fled,
And the bright ringlets hung so still—
The lovely child was dead!

"Alas!" I cried, "fair faded thing!
Thou hast wrung bitter tears,
And thou hast left a woe, to cling
Round yearning hearts for years!"

But then a voice came sweet and low—
I turn'd, and near me sate
A woman with a mourner's brow,
Pale, yet not desolate.

And in her still, clear, matron face,
All solemnly serene,
A shadow'd image I could trace
Of that young slumberer's mien.

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"Stranger! thou pitiest me," she said
With lips that faintly smiled,
"As here I watch beside my dead,
My fair and precious child.

"But know, the time-worn heart may be
By pangs in this world riven,
Keener than theirs who yield, like me,
An angel thus to heaven!"

THE KAISER'S FEAST.

[Louis, Emperor of Germany, having put his brother, the Palsgrave Rodolphus, under the ban of the Empire in the twelfth century, that unfortunate prince fled to England, where he died in neglect and poverty. "After his decease, his mother Matilda privately invited his children to return to Germany; and, by her mediation, during a season of festivity, when Louis kept wassail in the castle of Heidelberg, the family of his brother presented themselves before him in the garb of suppliants, imploring pity and forgiveness. To this appeal the victor softened."—MISS BENGER'S *Memoirs of the Queen of Bohemia.*]

THE Kaiser feasted in his hall—
The red wine mantled high;
Banners were trembling on the wall
To the peals of minstrelsy:
And many a gleam and sparkle came
From the armour hung around,
As it caught the glance of the torch's flame,
Or the hearth with pine-boughs crown'd.

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Why fell there silence on the chord
Beneath the harper's hand?
And suddenly from that rich board,
Why rose the wassail band?
The strings were hush'd—the knights made way
For the queenly mother's tread,
As up the hall, in dark array,
Two fair-hair'd boys she led.

She led them e'en to the Kaiser's place,
And still before him stood;
Till, with strange wonder, o'er his face
Flush'd the proud warrior-blood:
And "Speak, my mother! speak!" he cried,
"Wherefore this mourning vest?
And the clinging children by thy side,
In weeds of sadness drest?"

"Well may a mourning vest be mine,
And theirs, my son, my son!
Look on the features of thy line
In each fair little one!
Though grief awhile within their eyes
Hath tamed the dancing glee,
Yet there thine own quick spirit lies—
Thy brother's children see!

"And where is he, thy brother—where?
He in thy home that grew,
And smiling, with his sunny hair,
Ever to greet thee flew?

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How would his arms thy neck entwine,
His fond lips press thy brow!
My son! oh, call these orphans thine!—
Thou hast no brother now!

"What! from their gentle eyes doth naught
Speak of thy childhood's hours,
And smite thee with a tender thought
Of thy dead father's towers?
Kind was thy boyish heart and true,
When rear'd together there,
Through the old woods like fawns ye flew—
Where is thy brother—where?

"Well didst thou love him then, and he
Still at thy side was seen!
How is it that such things can be
As though they ne'er had been?
Evil was this world's breath, which came
Between the good and brave!
Now must the tears of grief and shame
Be offer'd to the grave.

"And let them, let them there be pour'd!
Though all unfelt below—
Thine own wrung heart, to love restored,
Shall soften as they flow.
Oh! death is mighty to make peace;
Now bid his work be done!
So many an inward strife shall cease—
Take, take these babes, my son!"

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His eye was dimm'd—the strong man shook
With feelings long suppress'd;
Up in his arms the boys he took,
And strain'd them to his breast.
And a shout from all in the royal hall
Burst forth to hail the sight;
And eyes were wet midst the brave that met
At the Kaiser's feast that night.

TASSO AND HIS SISTER.

"Devant vous est Sorrente; là démeuroit la sœur de Tasse, quand il vint en pélérin demander à cette obscure amie un asyle contre l'injustice des princes.—Ses longues douleurs avaient presque egaré sa raison; il ne lui restoit plus que son génie."—*Corinne.*

She sat, where on each wind that sigh'd
The citron's breath went by,
While the red gold of eventide
Burn'd in the Italian sky.
Her bower was one where daylight's close
Full oft sweet laughter found,
As thence the voice of childhood rose
To the high vineyards round.

But still and thoughtful at her knee
Her children stood that hour,
Their bursts of song and dancing glee
Hush'd as by words of power.
With bright fix'd wondering eyes, that gazed
Up to their mother's face,
With brows through parted ringlets raised,
They stood in silent grace.

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While she—yet something o'er her look
Of mournfulness was spread—
Forth from a poet's magic book
The glorious numbers read;
The proud undying lay, which pour'd
Its light on evil years;
His of the gifted pen and sword,*
The triumph, and the tears.

She read of fair Erminia's flight,
Which Venice once might hear
Sung on her glittering seas at night
By many a gondolier.
Of him she read, who broke the charm
That wrapt the myrtle grove;
Of Godfrey's deeds, of Tancred's arm,
That slew his Paynim love.

Young cheeks around that bright page glow'd,
Young holy hearts were stirr'd;
And the meek tears of woman flow'd
Fast o'er each burning word.
And sounds of breeze, and fount, and leaf,
Came sweet, each pause between,
When a strange voice of sudden grief
Burst on the gentle scene.

The mother turn'd—a wayworn man,
In pilgrim garb, stood nigh,

* It is scarcely necessary to recall the well-known Italian saying, that Tasso, with his sword and pen, was superior to all men.

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Of stately mien, yet wild and wan,
Of proud yet mournful eye.
But drops which would not stay for pride
From that dark eye gush'd free,
As pressing his pale brow, he cried,
"Forgotten! e'en by thee!

"Am I so changed?—and yet we two
Oft hand in hand have play'd;
This brow hath been all bathed in dew
From wreaths which thou hast made;
We have knelt down and said one prayer,
And sung one vesper strain;
My soul is dim with clouds of care—
Tell me those words again!

"Life hath been heavy on my head—
I come a stricken deer,
Bearing the heart, midst crowds that bled,
To bleed in stillness here."
She gazed, till thoughts that long had slept
Shook all her thrilling frame—
She fell upon his neck and wept,
Murmuring her brother's name.

Her *brother's* name!—and who was he,
The weary one, th' unknown,
That came, the bitter world to flee,
A stranger to his own?
He was the bard of gifts divine
To sway the souls of men;
He of the song for Salem's shrine,
He of the sword and pen!

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THE RELEASE OF TASSO.

THERE came a bard to Rome ; he brought a lyre
Of sounds to peal through Rome's triumphant sky,
To mourn a hero on his funeral pyre,
Or greet a conqueror with its war-notes high;
For on each chord had fallen the gift of fire,
The living breath of Power and Victory,—
Yet he, its lord, the sovereign city's guest,
Sighed but to flee away and be at rest.

He brought a spirit whose ethereal birth
Was of the loftiest, and whose haunts had been
Amidst the marvels and the pomps of earth,
Wild fairy bowers, and groves of deathless green,
And fields where mail-clad bosoms prove their worth,
When flashing swords light up the stormy scene:
He brought a weary heart, a wasted frame,—
The Child of Visions from a dungeon came.

On the blue waters, as in joy they sweep,
With starlight floating o'er their swells and falls—
On the blue waters of the Adrian deep
His numbers had been sung; and in the halls,
Where, through rich foliage if a sunbeam peep,
It seems Heaven's wakening to the sculptur'd walls,
Had princes listened to those lofty strains,
While the high soul they burst from pined in chains.

And in the summer gardens, where the spray
Of founts, far glancing from their marble bed,

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Rains on the flowering myrtles in its play,
And the sweet limes, and glassy leaves that spread
Round the deep golden citrons, o'er his lay
Dark eyes, dark soft Italian eyes, had shed
Warm tears, fast glittering in that sun whose light
Was a forbidden glory to his sight.

Oh! if it be that wizard sign, and spell,
And talisman, had power of old to bind,
In the dark chambers of some cavern-cell,
Or knotted oak, the spirits of the wind,
Things of the lightning-pinion, wont to dwell
High o'er the reach of eagles, and to find
Joy in the rush of storms,—even such a doom
Was that high minstrel's in his dungeon-gloom.

But he was free at last!—the glorious land
Of the white Alps and pine-crown'd Apennines,
Along whose shore the sapphire seas expand,
And the wastes teem with myrtle, and the shrines
Of long-forgotten Gods from Nature's hand
Receive bright offerings still—with all its vines,
And rocks, and ruins, clear before him lay;—
The seal was taken from the founts of day.

The winds came o'er his cheek—the soft winds, blending
All summer sounds and odours in their sigh;
The orange-groves waved round; the hills were sending
Their bright streams down; the free birds darting by,

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And the blue festal heavens above him bending,
As if to fold a world where none could die.
And who was he that looked upon these things?
—If but of earth, yet one whose thoughts were wings

To bear him o'er creation; and whose mind
Was an air harp, awakening to the sway
Of sunny Nature's breathings unconfined,
With all the mystic harmonies that lay
Far in the slumber of its chords enshrined,
Till the light breeze went thrilling on its way.
—There was no sound that wandered through the sky,
But told him secrets in its melody.

Was the deep forest lonely unto him,
With all its whispering leaves? Each dell and glade
Teemed with such forms as on the moss-clad brim
Of fountains, in their sparry grottoes, played,
Seen by the Greek of yore through twilight dim,
Or misty noontide in the laurel shade.
—There is no solitude on earth so deep
As that where man decrees that man should weep!

But oh! the life in Nature's green domains,
The breathing sense of joy! where flowers are springing
By starry thousands on the slopes and plains,
And the grey rocks—and all the arched woods ringing,
And the young branches trembling to the strains
Of wild-born creatures, through the sunshine winging
Their fearless flight,—and sylvan echoes round,
Mingling all tones to one Æolian sound.

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And the glad voice, the laughing voice of streams,
And the low cadence of the silvery sea,
And reed-notes from the mountains, and the beams
Of the warm sun—all these are for the free!
And they were his once more, the bard whose dreams
Their spirit still had haunted. Could it be
That he had borne the chain? Oh! who shall dare
To say how much Man's heart uncrushed may bear?

So deep a root hath hope! but woe for this
Our frail mortality, that aught so bright,
So almost burthened with excess of bliss,
As the rich hour which back to summer's light
Calls the worn captive, with the gentle kiss
Of winds, and gush of waters, and the sight
Of the green earth, must so be bought with years
Of the heart's fever, parching up its tears,

And feeding, a slow fire, on all its powers,
Until the boon for which we gasp in vain,
If hardly won at length, too late made ours,
When the soul's wing is broken, comes like rain
Withheld till evening, on the stately flowers
Which withered in the noontide, ne'er again
To lift their heads in glory. So doth Earth
Breathe on her gifts, and melt away their worth.

The sailor dies in sight of that green shore,
Whose fields, in slumbering beauty, seemed to lie
On the deep's foam, amidst its hollow roar
Called up to sunlight by his fantasy.

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And when the shining desert-mists that wore
The lake's bright semblance, have been all pass'd by,
The pilgrim sinks beside the fountain wave,
Which dashes from its rock, too late to save.

Or if we live, if that too dearly bought,
And made too precious by long hopes and fears,
Remain our own—love, darkened and o'erwrought
By memory of privation—love, which wears
And casts o'er life a troubled hue of thought,
Becomes the shadow of our closing years,
Making it almost misery to possess
Aught watched with such unquiet tenderness.

Such unto him, the Bard, the worn and wild,
And sick with hope deferred, from whom the sky,
With all its clouds in burning glory piled,
Had been shut out by long captivity.
Such freedom was to Tasso. As a child
Is to the mother, whose foreboding eye
In its too radiant glance from day to day,
Reads that which calls the brightest first away.

And he became a wanderer—in whose breast
Wild fear which, e'en when every sense doth sleep,
Clings to the burning heart, a wakeful guest,
Sat brooding as a spirit, raised to keep
Its gloomy vigil of intense unrest
O'er treasures burthening life, and buried deep
In cavern-tomb, and sought through shades and stealth,
By some pale mortal, trembling at his wealth.

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But woe for those who trample o'er a mind!
A deathless thing! They know not what they do,
Nor what they deal with. Man perchance may bind
The flower his step hath bruised; or light anew
The torch he quenches; or to music wind
Again the lyre-string from his touch that flew;—
But for the soul!—oh! tremble, and beware
To lay rude hands upon God's mysteries *there!*

For blindness wraps that world—our touch may turn
Some balance fearfully and darkly hung;
Or put out some bright spark whose ray should burn
To point the way a thousand rocks among;
Or break some subtle chain which none discern,
Though binding down the terrible, the strong,
Th' o'ersweeping passions, which to loose on life
Is to set free the elements for strife.

Who then to power and glory shall restore
That which our evil rashness hath undone?
Who unto mystic harmony once more
Attune those viewless chords?—There is but One!
He that through dust the stream of life can pour,
The Mighty and the Merciful alone.
—Yet oft His paths have midnight for their shade—
He leaves to Man the ruin Man hath made.

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THE NECROMANCER.

"Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please?
Resolve me of all ambiguities?
Perform what desperate enterprises I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the New-found World
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates."

MARLOW'S *Faustus*.

AN old man on his deathbed lay, an old yet stately man;
His lip seemed moulded for command, though quivering now, and wan;
By fits a wild and wandering fire shot from his troubled eye,
But his pale brow still austerely wore its native mastery.

There were gorgeous things from lands afar, strewn round the mystic room;
From where the orient palm-trees wave, bright gem and dazzling plume;
And vases with rich odour filled, that o'er the couch of death
Shed forth, like groves from Indian isles, a spicy summer's breath.

And sculptured forms of olden time, in their strange beauty white,
Stood round the chamber solemnly, robed as in ghostly light;

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All passionless and still they stood, and shining through the gloom,
Like watchers of another world, stern angels of the tomb.

'Twas silent as a midnight church, that dim and mystic place,
While shadows cast from many thoughts o'erswept the old man's face.
He spoke at last, and low and deep, yet piercing was the tone,
To one that o'er him long had watched, in reverence and alone.

"I leave," he said, "an empire dread, by mount, and shore, and sea,
Wider than Roman Eagle's wing e'er traversed proudly free;
Never did King or Kaiser yet such high dominion boast,
Or Soldan of the sunbeam's clime, girt with a conquering host.

"They hear me—*they* that dwell far down where the sea-serpent lies,
And they, the unseen, on Afric's hills that sport when tempests rise;
And they that rest in central caves, whence fiery streams make way,
My lightest whisper shakes their sleep, they hear me, and obey.

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"They come to me with ancient wealth—with crown
and cup of gold,
From cities roofed with ocean-waves, that buried
them of old;
They come from Earth's most hidden veins, which
man shall never find,
With gems that have the hues of fire deep at their
heart enshrined.

"But a mightier power is on me now—it rules my
struggling breath;
I have sway'd the rushing elements—but still and
strong is Death!
I quit my throne, yet leave I not my vassal-spirits
free—
Thou hast brave and high aspirings, youth!—my
Sceptre is for thee!

"Now listen! I will teach thee words whose mas-
tery shall compel
The viewless ones to do thy work, in wave, or blood,
or hell!
But never, never mayst thou breathe those words
in human ear,
Until thou'rt laid, as I am now, the grave's dark
portals near."

His voice in faintness died away,—and a sudden
flush was seen,
A mantling of the rapid blood o'er the youth's
impassioned mien—

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A mantling and a fading swift, a look with sadness fraught;
And that too passed—and boldly then rushed forth the ardent thought.

"Must those high words of sovereignty ne'er sound in human ear?
I have a friend—a noble friend—as life or freedom dear!
Thou offerest me a glorious gift—a proud majestic throne,
But I know the secrets of *his* heart—and shall I seal mine own?

"And there is one that loves me well, with yet a gentle love—
Oh! is not *her* full, boundless faith, all power, all wealth above?
Must a deep gulf between the souls, now closely linked, be set?
Keep, keep the Sceptre!—leave me free, and loved and trustful yet!"

Then from the old man's haughty lips was heard the sad reply—
"Well hast thou chosen!—I blame thee not—I that unwept must die.
Live thou, beloved and trustful yet!—No more on human head
Be the sorrows of unworthy gifts from bitter vials shed!"

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ULLA; OR, THE ADJURATION.

"Yet speak to me! I have outwatched the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain, in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wander'd o'er the earth,
And never found thy likeness. Speak to me!
This once—once more!"

Manfred.

"Thou'rt gone!—thou'rt slumbering low,
With the sounding seas above thee:
It is but a restless woe,
But a haunting dream to love thee!
Thrice the glad swan has sung
To greet the spring-time hours,
Since thine oar at parting flung
The white spray up in showers.

There's a shadow of the grave on thy hearth and round thy home;
Come to me from the ocean's dead!—thou art surely of them—come!"

'Twas Ulla's voice! Alone she stood
In the Iceland summer night,
Far gazing o'er a glassy flood,
From a dark rock's beetling height.

"I know thou hast thy bed
Where the sea-weed's coil hath bound thee;
The storm sweeps o'er thy head,
But the depths are hush'd around thee.
What wind shall point the way
To the chambers where thou'rt lying?

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Come to me thence, and say
If thou thought'st on me in dying?

I will not shrink to see thee with a bloodless lip and cheek.
Come to me from the ocean's dead!—thou'rt surely of them—speak!"

She listen'd—'twas the wind's low moan,
'Twas the ripple of the wave,
'Twas the wakening osprey's cry alone
As it startled from its cave.

"I know each fearful spell
Of the ancient Runic lay,
Whose mutter'd words compel
The tempest to obey.
But I adjure not *thee*
By magic sign or song;
My voice shall stir the sea
By love—the deep, the strong!

By the might of woman's tears, by the passion of her sighs,
Come to me from the ocean's dead!—by the vows we pledged—arise!"

Again she gazed with an eager glance,
Wandering and wildly bright;—
She saw but the sparkling waters dance
To the arrowy northern light.

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"By the slow and struggling death
Of hope that loathed to part,
By the fierce and withering breath
Of despair on youth's high heart—
By the weight of gloom which clings
To the mantle of the night,
By the heavy dawn which brings
Naught lovely to the sight—

By all that from my weary soul thou hast wrung of grief and fear,
Come to me from the ocean's dead! Awake, arise, appear!"

Was it her yearning spirit's dream?
Or did a pale form rise,
And o'er the hush'd wave glide and gleam,
With bright, still, mournful eyes?

"Have the depths heard? They have!
My voice prevails—thou'rt there,
Dim from thy watery grave—
O thou that wert so fair!
Yet take me to thy rest!
There dwells no fear with love;
Let me slumber on thy breast,
While the billow rolls above!

Where the long-lost things lie hid, where the bright ones have their home,
We will sleep among the ocean's dead. Stay for me, stay!—I come!"

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There was a sullen plunge below,
A flashing on the main;
And the wave shut o'er that wild heart's woe—
Shut, and grew still again.

TO WORDSWORTH.

THINE is a strain to read among the hills,
The old and full of voices,—by the source
Of some free stream, whose gladdening presence fills
The solitude with sound; for in its course
Even such is thy deep song, that seems a part
Of those high scenes, a fountain from their heart.

Or its calm spirit fitly may be taken
To the still breast in sunny garden bowers,
Where vernal winds each tree's low tones awaken,
And bud and bell with changes mark the hours.
There let thy thoughts be with me, while the day
Sinks with a golden and serene decay.

Or by some hearth where happy faces meet,
When night hath hush'd the woods, with all their birds,
There, from some gentle voice, that lay were sweet
As antique music, link'd with household words;
While in pleased murmurs woman's lip might move,
And the raised eye of childhood shine in love.

Or where the shadows of dark solemn yews
Brood silently o'er some lone burial-ground,

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Thy verse hath power that brightly might diffuse
A breath, a kindling, as of spring, around;
From its own glow of hope and courage high,
And steadfast faith's victorious constancy.

True bard and holy!—thou art e'en as one
Who, by some secret gift of soul or eye,
In every spot beneath the smiling sun,
Sees where the springs of living waters lie:
Unseen awhile they sleep—till, touch'd by thee,
Bright healthful waves flow forth, to each glad wanderer free.

A MONARCH'S DEATHBED.

[The Emperor Albert of Hapsburg, who was assassinated by his nephew, afterwards called John the Parricide, was left to die by the wayside, and only supported in his last moments by a female peasant, who happened to be passing.]

A MONARCH on his deathbed lay—
Did censers waft perfume,
And soft lamps pour their silvery ray,
Through his proud chamber's gloom?
He lay upon a greensward bed,
Beneath a darkening sky—
A lone tree waving o'er his head,
A swift stream rolling by.

Had he then fallen as warriors fall,
Where spear strikes fire with spear?
Was there a banner for his pall,
A buckler for his bier?

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Not so—nor cloven shields nor helms
Had strewn the bloody sod,
Where he, the helpless lord of realms,
Yielded his soul to God.

Were there not friends with words of cheer,
And princely vassals nigh?
And priests, the crucifix to rear
Before the glazing eye?
A peasant girl that royal head
Upon her bosom laid,
And, shrinking not for woman's dread,
The face of death survey'd.

Alone she sat: from hill and wood
Red sank the mournful sun;
Fast gush'd the fount of noble blood—
Treason its worst had done.
With her long hair she vainly press'd
The wounds, to stanch their tide—
Unknown, on that meek humble breast,
Imperial Albert died!

TO THE MEMORY OF HEBER.

"Umile in tanta gloria."
PETRARCH.

If it be sad to speak of treasures gone,
Of sainted genius call'd too soon away,
Of light from this world taken, while it shone
Yet kindling onward to the perfect day—

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How shall our grief, if mournful these things be,
Flow forth, O thou of many gifts! for thee?

Hath not thy voice been here amongst us heard?
And that deep soul of gentleness and power,
Have we not felt its breath in every word
Wont from thy lip as Hermon's dew to shower?
Yes! in our hearts thy fervent thoughts have burn'd—
Of heaven they were, and thither have return'd.

How shall we mourn thee? With a lofty trust,
Our life's immortal birthright from above!
With a glad faith, whose eye, to track the just,
Through shades and mysteries lifts a glance of love,
And yet can weep!—for nature thus deplores
The friend that leaves us, though for happier shores.

And one high tone of triumph o'er thy bier,
One strain of solemn rapture, be allow'd!
Thou, that rejoicing on thy mid career,
Not to decay, but unto death hast bow'd,
In those bright regions of the rising sun,
Where victory ne'er a crown like thine had won.

Praise! for yet one more name with power endow'd
To cheer and guide us, onward as we press;
Yet one more image on the heart bestow'd
To dwell there, beautiful in holiness!
Thine, Heber, thine! whose memory from the dead
Shines as the star which to the Saviour led!

ST ASAPH, *Sept.* 1826.

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THE ADOPTED CHILD.

"WHY wouldst thou leave me, O gentle child?
Thy home on the mountain is bleak and wild,
A straw-roof'd cabin, with lowly wall—
Mine is a fair and a pillar'd hall,
Where many an image of marble gleams,
And the sunshine of picture for ever streams."

"Oh! green is the turf where my brothers play,
Through the long bright hours of the summer day;
They find the red cup-moss where they climb,
And they chase the bee o'er the scented thyme,
And the rocks where the heath-flower blooms they know—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!"

"Content thee, boy! in my bower to dwell—
Here are sweet sounds which thou lovest well;
Flutes on the air in the stilly noon,
Harps which the wandering breezes tune,
And the silvery wood-note of many a bird
Whose voice was ne'er in thy mountains heard."

"Oh! my mother sings at the twilight's fall,
A song of the hills far more sweet than all;
She sings it under her own green tree,
To the babe half slumbering on her knee:
I dreamt last night of that music low—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!"

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"Thy mother is gone, from her cares to rest—
She hath taken the babe on her quiet breast;
Thou wouldst meet her footstep, my boy! no more,
Nor hear the song at the cabin door.
Come thou with me to the vineyards nigh,
And we'll pluck the grapes of the richest die."

"Is my mother gone from her home away?
But I know that my brothers are there at play—
I know they are gathering the foxglove's bell,
Or the long fern-leaves by the sparkling well;
Or they launch their boats where the bright streams flow—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!"

"Fair child! thy brothers are wanderers now,
They sport no more on the mountain's brow;
They have left the fern by the spring's green side,
And the streams where the fairy barks were tried.
Be thou at peace in thy brighter lot,
For thy cabin home is a lonely spot."

"Are they gone, all gone from the sunny hill?—
But the bird and the blue-fly rove o'er it still;
And the red-deer bound in their gladness free,
And the heath is bent by the singing bee,
And the waters leap, and the fresh winds blow—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!"

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INVOCATION.

"I call'd on dreams and visions, to disclose
That which is veil'd from waking thought; conjured
Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
To appear and answer."

WORDSWORTH.

ANSWER me, burning stars of night!
Where is the spirit gone,
That past the reach of human sight
As a swift breeze hath flown?
And the stars answer'd me—"We roll
In light and power on high;
But, of the never-dying soul,
Ask that which cannot die."

O many-toned and chainless wind!
Thou art a wanderer free;
Tell me if thou its place canst find,
Far over mount and sea?
And the wind murmur'd in reply—
"The blue deep I have cross'd,
And met its barks and billows high,
But not what thou hast lost."

Ye clouds that gorgeously repose
Around the setting sun,
Answer! have ye a home for those
Whose earthly race is run?
The bright clouds answer'd—"We depart,
We vanish from the sky;
Ask what is deathless in thy heart,
For that which cannot die."

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Speak then, thou voice of God within,
Thou of the deep low tone!
Answer me, through life's restless din—
Where is the spirit flown?
And the voice answer'd—"Be thou still!
Enough to know is given:
Clouds, winds, and stars *their* part fulfil—
Thine is, to trust in Heaven."

KÖRNER AND HIS SISTER.

["Charles Theodore Körner, the celebrated young German poet and soldier, was killed in a skirmish with a detachment of French troops on the 20th of August 1813, a few hours after the composition of his popular piece, *The Sword Song*. He was buried at the village of Wöbbelin in Mecklenburg, under a beautiful oak, in a recess of which he had frequently deposited verses composed by him while campaigning in its vicinity. The monument erected to his memory is of cast-iron; and the upper part is wrought into a lyre and sword, a favourite emblem of Körner's, from which one of his works had been entitled. Near the grave of the poet is that of his only sister, who died of grief for his loss, having only survived him long enough to complete his portrait and a drawing of his burial-place. Over the gate of the cemetery is engraved one of his own lines:—

'Vergiss die treuen Tödten nicht.'
(Forget not the faithful dead.)"

—*See* RICHARDSON'S *Translation of Körner's Life and Works, and* DOWNE'S *Letters from Mecklenburg.*]

GREEN wave the oak for ever o'er thy rest,
Thou that beneath its crowning foliage sleepest,

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And, in the stillness of thy country's breast,
Thy place of memory as an altar keepest;
Brightly thy spirit o'er her hills was pour'd,
Thou of the Lyre and Sword!

Rest, bard! rest, soldier! By the father's hand
Here shall the child of after years be led,
With his wreath-offering silently to stand
In the hush'd presence of the glorious dead—
Soldier and bard! for thou thy path hast trod
With freedom and with God.

The oak waved proudly o'er thy burial rite,
On thy crown'd bier to slumber warriors bore thee,
And with true hearts thy brethren of the fight
Wept as they veil'd their drooping banners o'er thee;
And the deep guns with rolling peal gave token
That Lyre and Sword were broken.

Thou hast a hero's tomb: a lowlier bed
Is hers, the gentle girl beside thee lying—
The gentle girl that bow'd her fair young head
When thou wert gone, in silent sorrow dying.
Brother, true friend! the tender and the brave!—
She pined to share thy grave.

Fame was thy gift from others;—but for *her*,
To whom the wide world held that only spot,
She loved thee!—lovely in your lives ye were,
And in your early deaths divided not.

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Thou hast thine oak, thy trophy,—what hath she?
Her own bless'd place by thee!

It was thy spirit, brother! which had made
The bright earth glorious to her youthful eye,
Since first in childhood midst the vines ye play'd,
And sent glad singing through the free blue sky.
Ye were but two—and when that spirit pass'd,
Woe to the one, the last!

Woe, yet not long! She linger'd but to trace
Thine image from the image in her breast—
Once, once again to see that buried face
But smile upon her, ere she went to rest.
Too sad a smile! its living light was o'er—
It answer'd hers no more.

The earth grew silent when thy voice departed,
The home too lonely whence thy step had fled;
What then was left for her the faithful-hearted?
Death, death, to still the yearning for the dead!
Softly she perish'd: be the Flower deplored
Here with the Lyre and Sword!

Have ye not met ere now?—so let those trust
That meet for moments but to part for years—
That weep, watch, pray, to hold back dust from dust—
That love, where love is but a fount of tears.
Brother! sweet sister! peace around ye dwell:
Lyre, Sword, and Flower, farewell!*

* The following lines, addressed to the author of the above, by the venerable father of Körner, who, with the

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THE DEATH-DAY OF KÖRNER.*

A song for the death-day of the brave—
A song of pride!
The youth went down to a hero's grave,
With the sword, his bride.†

He went, with his noble heart unworn,
And pure, and high—
An eagle stooping from clouds of morn,
Only to die.

He went with the lyre, whose lofty tone
Beneath his hand
Had thrill'd to the name of his God alone
And his fatherland.

mother, survived the "Lyre, Sword, and Flower," here commemorated, may not be uninteresting to the German reader:—

Wohllaut tönt aus der Ferne von freundlichen Lüften getragen,
Schmeichelt mit lindernder Kraft sich in der Trauernden Ohr,
Stärkt den erhebenden Glauben an solcher seelen Verwandschaft,
Die zum Tempel die brust nur für das Würdige weihn.
Aus dem Lande zu dem sich stets der gefeyerte Jungling
Hingezogen gefühlt, wird ihm ein gläzender Lohn.
Heil dem Brittischen Volke, wenn ihm das Deutsche nicht fremd ist!
Uber Länder und Meer reichen sich beyde die Hand.

Theodor Körner's Vater.

* On reading part of a letter from Körner's father, addressed to Mr Richardson, the translator of his works, in which he speaks of "The Death-day of his son."

† See *The Sword Song*, composed on the morning of his death.

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And with all his glorious feelings yet
In their first glow,
Like a southern stream that no frost hath met
To chain its flow.

A song for the death-day of the brave—
A song of pride!
For him that went to a hero's grave,
With the sword, his bride.

He hath left a voice in his trumpet lays
To turn the flight,
And a guiding spirit for after days,
Like a watch-fire's light.

And a grief in his father's soul to rest,
Midst all high thought;
And a memory unto his mother's breast,
With healing fraught.

And a name and fame above the blight
Of earthly breath,
Beautiful—beautiful and bright,
In life and death!

A song for the death-day of the brave—
A song of pride!
For him that went to a hero's grave,
With the sword, his bride!

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AN HOUR OF ROMANCE.

"I come
To this sweet place for quiet. Every tree
And bush, and fragrant flower, and hilly path,
And thymy mound that flings unto the winds
Its morning incense, is my friend."

BARRY CORNWALL.

THERE were thick leaves above me and around,
And low sweet sighs like those of childhood's sleep,
Amidst their dimness, and a fitful sound
As of soft showers on water; dark and deep
Lay the oak shadows o'er the turf, so still
They seem'd but pictured glooms; a hidden rill
Made music, such as haunts us in a dream,
Under the fern-tufts; and a tender gleam
Of soft green light, as by the glow-worm shed,
Came pouring through the woven beech-boughs down,
And steep'd the magic page wherein I read
Of royal chivalry and old renown,
A tale of Palestine.* Meanwhile the bee
Swept past me with a tone of summer hours—
A drowsy bugle, wafting thoughts of flowers,
Blue skies, and amber sunshine: brightly free,
On filmy wings, the purple dragon-fly
Shot glancing like a fairy javelin by;
And a sweet voice of sorrow told the dell
Where sat the lone wood-pigeon.

* *The Talisman—Tales of the Crusaders.*

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But ere long,
All sense of these things faded, as the spell
Breathing from that high gorgeous tale grew strong
On my chain'd soul. 'Twas not the leaves I heard;—
A Syrian wind the lion-banner stirr'd,
Through its proud floating folds. 'Twas not the brook
Singing in secret through its grassy glen;—
A wild shrill trumpet of the Saracen
Peal'd from the desert's lonely heart, and shook
The burning air. Like clouds when winds are high,
O'er glittering sands flew steeds of Araby,
And tents rose up, and sudden lance and spear
Flash'd where a fountain's diamond wave lay clear,
Shadow'd by graceful palm-trees. Then the shout
Of merry England's joy swell'd freely out,
Sent through an eastern heaven, whose glorious hue
Made shields dark mirrors to its depths of blue:
And harps were there—I heard their sounding strings,
As the waste echo'd to the mirth of kings.
The bright mask faded. Unto life's worn track,
What call'd me from its flood of glory back?
A voice of happy childhood!—and they pass'd,
Banner, and harp, and Paynim's trumpet's blast.
Yet might I scarce bewail the splendours gone,
My heart so leap'd to that sweet laughter's tone.

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A VOYAGER'S DREAM OF LAND.

"His very heart athirst
To gaze at nature in her green array,
Upon the ship's tall side he stands possess'd
With visions prompted by intense desire;
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find:
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more."

COWPER.

THE hollow dash of waves!—the ceaseless roar!—
Silence, ye billows!—vex my soul no more.

There's a spring in the woods by my sunny home,
Afar from the dark sea's tossing foam;
Oh! the fall of that fountain is sweet to hear,
As a song from the shore to the sailor's ear!
And the sparkle which up to the sun it throws
Through the feathery fern and the olive boughs,
And the gleam on its path as it steals away
Into deeper shades from the sultry day,
And the large water-lilies that o'er its bed
Their pearly leaves to the soft light spread,
They haunt me! I dream of that bright spring's flow,
I thirst for its rills like a wounded roe!

Be still, thou sea-bird, with thy clanging cry!
My spirit sickens as thy wing sweeps by.

Know ye my home, with the lulling sound
Of leaves from the lime and the chestnut round?

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Know ye it, brethren! where bower'd it lies
Under the purple of southern skies?
With the streamy gold of the sun that shines
In through the cloud of its clustering vines,
And the summer breath of the myrtle flowers,
Borne from the mountain in dewy hours,
And the fire-fly's glance through the dark'ning shades,
Like shooting stars in the forest glades,
And the scent of the citron at eve's dim fall—
Speak! have ye known, have ye felt them all?

The heavy rolling surge! the rocking mast!—
Hush! give my dream's deep music way, thou blast!

Oh, the glad sounds of the joyous earth!
The notes of the singing cicala's mirth,
The murmurs that live in the mountain pines,
The sighing of reeds as the day declines,
The wings flitting home through the crimson glow
That steeps the wood when the sun is low,
The voice of the night-bird that sends a thrill
To the heart of the leaves when the winds are still—
I hear them!—around me they rise, they swell,
They call back my spirit with Hope to dwell—
They come with a breath from the fresh spring-time,
And waken my youth in its hour of prime.

The white foam dashes high—away, away!
Shroud my green land no more, thou blinding spray!

It is there!—down the mountains I see the sweep
Of the chestnut forests, the rich and deep,

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With the burden and glory of flowers that they bear
Floating upborne on the blue summer air,
And the light pouring through them in tender gleams,
And the flashing forth of a thousand streams!
Hold me not, brethren! I go, I go
To the hills of my youth, where the myrtles blow,
To the depths of the woods, where the shadows rest,
Massy and still, on the greensward's breast,
To the rocks that resound with the water's play—
I hear the sweet laugh of my fount—give way!

Give way!—the booming surge, the tempest's roar,
The sea-bird's wail shall vex my soul no more.

THE EFFIGIES.

"Der rasche Kampf verewigt einen Mann:
Er falle gleich, so preiset ihn das Lied.
Allein die Thränen, die unendlichen
Der überbliebnen, der verlass'nen Frau,
Zählt keine Nachwelt."

GOETHE.

WARRIOR! whose image on thy tomb,
With shield and crested head,
Sleeps proudly in the purple gloom
By the stain'd window shed;
The records of thy name and race
Have faded from the stone,
Yet, through a cloud of years, I trace
What thou hast been and done.

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A banner, from its flashing spear,
flung out o'er many a fight;
A war-cry ringing far and clear,
And strong to turn the flight;
An arm that bravely bore the lance
On for the holy shrine;
A haughty heart and a kingly glance—
Chief! were not these things thine?

A lofty place where leaders sate
Around the council board;
In festive halls a chair of state
When the blood-red wine was pour'd;
A name that drew a prouder tone
From herald, harp, and bard:
Surely these things were all thine own—
So hadst thou thy reward.

Woman! whose sculptured form at rest
By the arm'd knight is laid,
With meek hands folded o'er a breast
In matron robes array'd;
What was *thy* tale?—O gentle mate
Of him, the bold and free,
Bound unto his victorious fate,
What bard hath sung of *thee?*

He woo'd a bright and burning star—
Thine was the void, the gloom,
The straining eye that follow'd far
His fast-receding plume;

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The heart-sick listening while his steed
Sent echoes on the breeze;
The pang—but when did *Fame* take heed
Of griefs obscure as these?

Thy silent and secluded hours
Through many a lonely day
While bending o'er thy broider'd flowers,
With spirits far away;
Thy weeping midnight prayers for him
Who fought on Syrian plains,
Thy watchings till the torch grew dim—
These fill no minstrel strains.

A still, sad life was thine!—long years
With tasks unguerdon'd fraught—
Deep, quiet love, submissive tears,
Vigils of anxious thought;
Prayer at the cross in fervour pour'd,
Alms to the pilgrim given—
Oh! happy, happier than thy lord,
In that lone path to heaven!

THE LANDING OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS IN NEW ENGLAND.

"Look now abroad! Another race has fill'd
Those populous borders—wide the wood recedes,
And towns shoot up, and fertile realms are till'd;
The land is full of harvests and green meads."

BRYANT.

THE breaking waves dash'd high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,

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And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches toss'd;

And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and waters o'er,
When a band of exiles moor'd their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,
They, the true-hearted, came;
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear;—
They shook the depths of the desert gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard and the sea;
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free!

The ocean eagle soar'd
From his nest by the white wave's foam;
And the rocking pines of the forest roar'd—
This was their welcome home!

There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that pilgrim band;—
Why had *they* come to wither there,
Away from their childhood's land?

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There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they thus afar?—
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?—
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trode.
They have left unstain'd what there they found—
Freedom to worship God.

THE SPIRIT'S MYSTERIES.

"And slight, withal, may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever;—it may be a sound—
A tone of music—summer's breath, or spring—
A flower—a leaf—the ocean—which may wound—
Striking th' electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound."
Childe Harold.

THE power that dwelleth in sweet sounds to waken
Vague yearnings, like the sailor's for the shore,
And dim remembrances, whose hue seems taken
From some bright former state, our own no more;
Is not this all a mystery? Who shall say
Whence are those thoughts, and whither tends their way?

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The sudden images of vanish'd things
That o'er the spirit flash, we know not why;
Tones from some broken harp's deserted strings,
Warm sunset hues of summers long gone by;
A rippling wave—the dashing of an oar—
A flower-scent floating past our parents' door;

A word—scarce noted in its hour perchance,
Yet back returning with a plaintive tone;
A smile—a sunny or a mournful glance,
Full of sweet meanings now from this world flown;
Are not these mysteries when to life they start,
And press vain tears in gushes from the heart?

And the far wanderings of the soul in dreams,
Calling up shrouded faces from the dead,
And with them bringing soft or solemn gleams,
Familiar objects brightly to o'erspread;
And wakening buried love, or joy, or fear—
These are night's mysteries—who shall make them clear?

And the strange inborn sense of coming ill,
That ofttimes whispers to the haunted breast,
In a low tone which nought can drown or still,
Midst feasts and melodies a secret guest;
Whence doth that murmur wake, that shadow fall?
Why shakes the spirit thus? 'Tis mystery all!

Darkly we move—we press upon the brink
Haply of viewless worlds, and know it not;

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Yes! it may be, that nearer than we think
  Are those whom death has parted from our lot!
Fearfully, wondrously, our souls are made—
Let us walk humbly on, but undismay'd!

Humbly—for knowledge strives in vain to feel
  Her way amidst these marvels of the mind;
Yet undismay'd—for do they not reveal
  Th' immortal being with our dust entwined?—
So let us deem! and e'en the tears they wake
Shall then be blest, for that high nature's sake.

THE DEPARTED.

"Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise—the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre."

BRYANT.

And shrink ye from the way
  To the spirit's distant shore?—
Earth's mightiest men, in arm'd array,
  Are thither gone before.

The warrior-kings, whose banner
  Flew far as eagles fly,
They are gone where swords avail them not,
  From the feast of victory.

And the seers who sat of yore
  By Orient palm or wave,
They have pass'd with all their starry lore—
  Can *ye* still fear the grave?

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We fear! we fear! the sunshine
Is joyous to behold,
And we reck not of the buried kings,
Nor the awful seers of old.

Ye shrink! the bards whose lays
Have made your deep hearts burn,
They have left the sun, and the voice of praise,
For the land whence none return.

And the beautiful, whose record
Is the verse that cannot die,
They too are gone, with their glorious bloom,
From the love of human eye.

Would ye not join that throng
Of the earth's departed flowers,
And the masters of the mighty song
In their far and fadeless bowers?

Those songs are high and holy,
But they vanquish not our fear:
Not from *our* path these flowers are gone—
We fain would linger here!

Linger then yet awhile,
As the last leaves upon the bough!—
Ye have loved the light of many a smile
That is taken from you now.

Their have been sweet singing voices
In your walks, that now are still;

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Their are seats left void in your earthly homes,
Which none again may fill.

Soft eyes are seen no more,
That made spring-time in your heart,
Kindred and friends are gone before—
And *ye* still fear to part?

We fear not now, we fear not!
Though the way through darkness bends;
Our souls are strong to follow *them*,
Our own familiar friends!

THE PALM TREE.*

It waved not through an eastern sky,
Beside a fount of Araby;
It was not fann'd by southern breeze
In some green isle of Indian seas;
Nor did its graceful shadow sleep
O'er stream of Afric, lone and deep.

But fair the exiled palm-tree grew
Midst foliage of no kindred hue;
Through the laburnum's dropping gold
Rose the light shaft of orient mould,
And Europe's violets, faintly sweet,
Purpled the moss-beds at its feet.

* This incident is, I think, recorded by De Lille, in his poem of *Les Jardins*.

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Strange look'd it there! The willow stream'd
Where silvery waters near it gleam'd;
The lime-bough lured the honey-bee
To murmur by the desert's tree,
And showers of snowy roses made
A lustre in its fan-like shade.

There came an eve of festal hours—
Rich music fill'd that garden's bowers;
Lamps, that from flowering branches hung,
On sparks of dew soft colour flung;
And bright forms glanced—a fairy show—
Under the blossoms to and fro.

But one, a lone one, midst the throng,
Seem'd reckless all of dance or song:
He was a youth of dusky mien,
Whereon the Indian sun had been,
Of crested brow and long black hair—
A stranger, like the palm-tree, there.

And slowly, sadly, moved his plumes,
Glittering athwart the leafy glooms.
He pass'd the pale-green olives by,
Nor won the chestnut flowers his eye;
But when to that sole palm he came,
Then shot a rapture through his frame!

To him, to him its rustling spoke—
The silence of his soul it broke!
It whisper'd of his own bright isle,
That lit the ocean with a smile;

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Ay, to his ear that native tone
Had something of the sea-wave's moan?

His mother's cabin-home, that lay
Where feathery cocoas fringed the bay;
The dashing of his brethren's oar—
The conch-note heard along the shore;
All through his wakening bosom swept—
He clasp'd his country's tree, and wept!

Oh! scorn him not! The strength whereby
The patriot girds himself to die,
Th' unconquerable power which fills
The freeman battling on his hills,
These have one fountain deep and clear—
The same whence gush'd that childlike tear!

THE CHILD'S LAST SLEEP.

SUGGESTED BY A MONUMENT OF CHANTREY'S.

Thou sleepest—but when wilt thou wake, fair child?
When the fawn awakes in the forest wild?
When the lark's wing mounts with the breeze of morn?
When the first rich breath of the rose is born?—
Lovely thou sleepest! yet something lies
Too deep and still on thy soft-seal'd eyes;
Mournful, though sweet, is thy rest to see—
When will the hour of thy rising be?

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Not when the fawn wakes—not when the lark
On the crimson cloud of the morn floats dark.
Grief with vain passionate tears hath wet
The hair, shedding gleams from thy pale brow yet;
Love, with sad kisses unfelt, hath press'd
Thy meek-dropt eyelids and quiet breast;
And the glad Spring, calling out bird and bee,
Shall colour all blossoms, fair child! but thee.

Thou'rt gone from us, bright one!—that *thou* shouldst die,
And life be left to the butterfly!*
Thou'rt gone as a dewdrop is swept from the bough:
Oh! for the world where thy home is now!
How may we love but in doubt and fear,
How may we anchor our fond hearts here;
How should e'en joy but a trembler be,
Beautiful dust! when we look on thee?

THE SUNBEAM.

Thou art no lingerer in monarch's hall—
A joy thou art, and a wealth to all!
A bearer of hope unto land and sea—
Sunbeam! what gift hath the world like thee?

Thou art walking the billows, and ocean smiles;
Thou hast touch'd with glory his thousand isles;

* A butterfly, as if resting on a flower, is sculptured on the monument.

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Thou hast lit up the ships and the feathery foam,
And gladden'd the sailor like words from home.

To the solemn depths of the forest-shades,
Thou art streaming on through their green arcades ;
And the quivering leaves that have caught thy glow
Like fire-flies glance to the pools below.

I look'd on the mountains—a vapour lay
Folding their heights in its dark array :
Thou brakest forth, and the mist became
A crown and a mantle of living flame.

I look'd on the peasant's lowly cot—
Something of sadness had wrapt the spot ;
But a gleam of *thee* on its lattice fell,
And it laugh'd into beauty at that bright spell.

To the earth's wild places a guest thou art,
Flushing the waste like the rose's heart ;
And thou scornest not from thy pomp to shed
A tender smile on the ruin's head.

Thou tak'st through the dim church-aisle thy way,
And its pillars from twilight flash forth to day,
And its high, pale tombs, with their trophies old,
Are bathed in a flood as of molten gold.

And thou turnest not from the humblest grave,
Where a flower to the sighing winds may wave ;
Thou scatter'st its gloom like the dreams of rest,
Thou sleepest in love on its grassy breast.

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Sunbeam of summer! oh, what is like thee?
Hope of the wilderness, joy of the sea!—
One thing is like thee to mortals given,
The faith touching all things with hues of heaven!

BREATHINGS OF SPRING.

"Thou givest me flowers, thou givest me songs;—bring back
The love that I have lost!"

WHAT wakest thou, Spring? Sweet voices in the woods,
And reed-like echoes, that have long been mute:
Thou bringest back, to fill the solitudes,
The lark's clear pipe, the cuckoo's viewless flute,
Whose tone seems breathing mournfulness or glee,
E'en as our hearts may be.

And the leaves greet thee, Spring!—the joyous leaves,
Whose tremblings gladden many a copse and glade,
Where each young spray a rosy flush receives,
When thy south wind hath pierced the whispery shade,
And happy murmurs, running through the grass,
Tell that thy footsteps pass.

And the bright waters—they too hear thy call,
Spring, the awakener! thou hast burst their sleep!
Amidst the hollows of the rocks their fall
Makes melody, and in the forests deep,

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Where sudden sparkles and blue gleams betray
Their windings to the day.

And flowers—the fairy-peopled world of flowers!
Thou from the dust hast set that glory free,
Colouring the cowslip with the sunny hours,
And penciling the wood anemone:
Silent they seem—yet each to thoughtful eye
Glows with mute poesy.

But what awakest thou in the *heart*, O Spring!
The human heart, with all its dreams and sighs?
Thou that givest back so many a buried thing,
Restorer of forgotten harmonies!
Fresh songs and scents break forth where'er thou art—
What wakest thou in the heart?

Too much, oh! there too much! We know not well
Wherefore it should be thus, yet roused by thee,
What fond, strange yearnings, from the soul's deep cell,
Gush for the faces we no more may see!
How are we haunted, in the wind's low tone,
By voices that are gone!

Looks of familiar love, that never more,
Never on earth, our aching eyes shall meet.
Past words of welcome to our household door,
And vanish'd smiles, and sounds of parted feet—
Spring! midst the murmurs of thy flowering trees,
Why, why revivest thou these?

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Vain longings for the dead !—why come they back
With thy young birds, and leaves, and living blooms ?
Oh ! is it not, that from thine earthly track
Hope to thy world may look beyond the tombs ?
Yes, gentle Spring! no sorrow dims thine air,
Breathed by our loved ones *there!*

THE ILLUMINATED CITY.

The hills all glow'd with a festive light,
For the royal city rejoiced by night :
There were lamps hung forth upon tower and tree,
Banners were lifted and streaming free ;
Every tall pillar was wreath'd with fire ;
Like a shooting meteor was every spire ;
And the outline of many a dome on high
Was traced, as in stars, on the clear dark sky.

I pass'd through the streets. There were throngs on throngs—
Like sounds of the deep were their mingled songs ;
There was music forth from each palace borne—
A peal of the cymbal, the harp, and horn ;
The forests heard it, the mountains rang,
The hamlets woke to its haughty clang ;
Rich and victorious was every tone,
Telling the land of her foes o'erthrown.

Didst thou meet not a mourner for all the slain ?
Thousands lie dead on their battle-plain!

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Gallant and true were the hearts that fell—
Grief in the homes they have left must dwell:
Grief o'er the aspect of childhood spread,
And bowing the beauty of woman's head!
Didst thou hear, midst the songs, not one tender moan
For the many brave to their slumbers gone?

I saw not the face of a weeper there—
Too strong, perchance, was the bright lamp's glare!
I heard not a wail midst the joyous crowd—
The music of victory was all too loud!
Mighty it roll'd on the winds afar,
Shaking the streets like a conqueror's car—
Through torches and streamers its flood swept by:
How could I listen for moan or sigh?

Turn then away from life's pageants—turn,
If its deep story thy heart would learn!
Ever too bright is that outward show,
Dazzling the eyes till they see not woe.
But lift the proud mantle which hides from thy view
The things thou shouldst gaze on, the sad and true;
Nor fear to survey what its folds conceal:—
So must thy spirit be taught to feel!

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THE SPELLS OF HOME.

" There blend the ties that strengthen
Our hearts in hours of grief,
The silver links that lengthen
Joy's visits when most brief."

BERNARD BARTON.

By the soft green light in the woody glade,
On the banks of moss where thy childhood play'd,
By the household tree through which thine eye
First look'd in love to the summer sky,
By the dewy gleam, by the very breath
Of the primrose-tufts in the grass beneath,
Upon thy heart there is laid a spell,
Holy and precious—oh, guard it well!

By the sleepy ripple of the stream,
Which hath lull'd thee into many a dream,
By the shiver of the ivy leaves
To the wind of morn at thy casement eaves,
By the bee's deep murmur in the limes,
By the music of the Sabbath chimes,
By every sound of thy native shade,
Stronger and dearer the spell is made.

By the gathering round the winter hearth,
When twilight call'd unto household mirth,
By the fairy tale or the legend old
In that ring of happy faces told,
By the quiet hour when hearts unite
In the parting prayer and the kind " Good-night !"
By the smiling eye, and the loving tone,
Over thy life has the spell been thrown.

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And bless that gift!—it hath gentle might,
A guardian power and a guiding light.
It hath led the freeman forth to stand
In the mountain-battles of his land;
It hath brought the wanderer o'er the seas
To die on the hills of his own fresh breeze;
And back to the gates of his father's hall
It hath led the weeping prodigal.

Yes! when thy heart, in its pride, would stray
From the pure first-loves of its youth away—
When the sullying breath of the world would come
O'er the flowers it brought from its childhood's home—
Think thou again of the woody glade,
And the sound by the rustling ivy made—
Think of the tree at thy father's door,
And the kindly spell shall have power once more!

ROMAN GIRL'S SONG.

"Roma, Roma, Roma!
Non è più come era prima."

Rome, Rome! thou art no more
As thou hast been!
On thy seven hills of yore
Thou sat'st a queen.

Thou hadst thy triumphs then
Purpling the street,
Leaders and sceptred men
Bow'd at thy feet.

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They that thy mantle wore,
As gods were seen—
Rome, Rome! thou art no more
As thou hast been!

Rome! thine imperial brow
Never shall rise:
What hast thou left thee now?—
Thou hast thy skies!

Blue, deeply blue, they are,
Gloriously bright!
Veiling thy wastes afar
With colour'd light.

Thou hast the sunset's glow,
Rome! for thy dower,
Flushing tall cypress-bough,
Temple and tower!

And all sweet sounds are thine,
Lovely to hear,
While night, o'er tomb and shrine,
Rests darkly clear.

Many a solemn hymn,
By starlight sung,
Sweeps through the arches dim,
Thy wrecks among.

Many a flute's low swell,
On thy soft air

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Lingers and loves to dwell
With summer there.

Thou hast the south's rich gift
Of sudden song—
A charm'd fountain, swift,
Joyous and strong.

Thou hast fair forms that move
With queenly tread;
Thou hast proud fanes above
Thy mighty dead.

Yet wears thy Tiber's shore
A mournful mien:—
Rome, Rome! thou art no more
As thou hast been!

THE DISTANT SHIP.

THE sea-bird's wing o'er ocean's breast
Shoots like a glancing star,
While the red radiance of the west
Spreads kindling fast and far;
And yet that splendour wins thee not—
Thy still and thoughtful eye
Dwells but on one dark distant spot
Of all the main and sky.

Look round thee! O'er the slumbering deep
A solemn glory broods;

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A fire hath touch'd the beacon-steep,
And all the golden woods;
A thousand gorgeous clouds on high
Burn with the amber light!—
What spell from that rich pageantry
Chains down thy gazing sight?

A softening thought of human cares,
A feeling link'd to earth!
Is not yon speck a bark which bears
The loved of many a hearth?
Oh! do not Hope, and Grief, and Fear,
Crowd her frail world even now,
And manhood's prayer and woman's tear
Follow her venturous prow?

Bright are the floating clouds above,
The glittering seas below;
But we are bound by cords of love
To kindred weal and woe.
Therefore, amidst this wide array
Of glorious things and fair,
My soul is on that bark's lone way—
For human hearts are there.

THE BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

Birds, joyous birds of the wandering wing!
Whence is it ye come with the flowers of spring?
"We come from the shores of the green old Nile,
From the land where the roses of Sharon smile,

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From the palms that wave through the Indian sky,
From the myrrh-trees of glowing Araby.

"We have swept o'er cities in song renown'd—
Silent they lie with the deserts round!
We have cross'd proud rivers whose tide hath roll'd
All dark with the warrior-blood of old;
And each worn wing hath regain'd its home,
Under peasant's roof-tree or monarch's dome."

And what have ye found in the monarch's dome,
Since last ye traversed the blue sea's foam?—
"We have found a change, we have found a pall,
And a gloom o'ershadowing the banquet's hall,
And a mark on the floor as of life-drops spilt—
Naught looks the same, save the nest we built!"

O joyous birds! it hath still been so;
Through the halls of kings doth the tempest go!
But the huts of the hamlet lie still and deep,
And the hills o'er their quiet a vigil keep:
Say what have ye found in the peasant's cot,
Since last ye parted from that sweet spot?—

"A change we have found there—and many a change!
Faces and footsteps, and all things strange!
Gone are the heads of the silvery hair,
And the young that were have a brow of care,
And the place is hush'd where the children play'd—
Nought looks the same, save the nest we made!"

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Sad is your tale of the beautiful earth,
Birds that o'ersweep it in power and mirth!
Yet through the wastes of the trackless air
Ye have a guide, and shall *we* despair?
Ye over desert and deep have pass'd—
So may *we* reach our bright home at last!

THE GRAVES OF A HOUSEHOLD.

THEY grew in beauty side by side,
They fill'd one home with glee;—
Their graves are sever'd far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow:
She had each folded flower in sight—
Where are those dreamers now?

One, midst the forest of the West,
By a dark stream is laid—
The Indian knows his place of rest,
Far in the cedar-shade.

The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one—
He lies where pearls lie deep;
He was the loved of all, yet none
O'er his low bed may weep.

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One sleeps where southern vines are drest
Above the noble slain:
He wrapt his colours round his breast
On a blood-red field of Spain.

And one—o'er *her* the myrtle showers
Its leaves, by soft winds fann'd;
She faded midst Italian flowers—
The last of that bright band.

And parted thus they rest, who play'd
Beneath the same green tree;
Whose voices mingled as they pray'd
Around one parent knee!

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
And cheer'd with song the hearth!—
Alas, for love! if *thou* wert all,
And naught beyond, O Earth!

MOZART'S REQUIEM.

[A short time before the death of Mozart, a stranger of remarkable appearance, and dressed in deep mourning, called at his house, and requested him to prepare a requiem, in his best style, for the funeral of a distinguished person. The sensitive imagination of the composer immediately seized upon the circumstance as an omen of his own fate; and the nervous anxiety with which he laboured to fulfil the task, had the effect of realising his impression. He died within a few days after completing this magnificent piece of music, which was performed at his interment.]

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"These birds of Paradise but long to flee
Back to their native mansion."
Prophecy of Dante.

A REQUIEM!—and for whom?
For beauty in its bloom?
For valour fallen—a broken rose or sword?
A dirge for king or chief,
With pomp of stately grief,
Banner, and torch, and waving plume deplored?

Not so—it is not so!
The warning voice I know,
From other worlds a strange mysterious tone;
A solemn funeral air
It call'd me to prepare,
And my heart answer'd secretly—my own!

One more then, one more strain,
In links of joy and pain,
Mighty the troubled spirit to enthrall!
And let me breathe my dower
Of passion and of power
Full into that deep lay—the last of all!

The last!—and I must go
From this bright world below,
This realm of sunshine, ringing with sweet sound!
Must leave its festal skies,
With all their melodies,
That ever in my breast glad echoes found!

Yet have I known it long:
Too restless and too strong

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Within this clay hath been th' o'ermastering flame;
Swift thoughts, that came and went,
Like torrents o'er me sent,
Have shaken, as a reed, my thrilling frame.

Like perfumes on the wind,
Which none may stay or bind,
The beautiful comes floating through my soul;
I strive with yearnings vain
The spirit to detain
Of the deep harmonies that past me roll!

Therefore disturbing dreams
Trouble the secret streams
And founts of music that o'erflow my breast;
Something far more divine
Than may on earth be mine,
Haunts my worn heart, and will not let me rest.

Shall I then *fear* the tone
That breathes from worlds unknown?—
Surely these feverish aspirations *there*
Shall grasp their full desire,
And this unsettled fire
Burn calmly, brightly, in immortal air.

One more then, one more strain;
To earthly joy and pain
A rich, and deep, and passionate farewell!
I pour each fervent thought,
With fear, hope, trembling, fraught,
Into the notes that o'er my dust shall swell.

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THE IMAGE IN LAVA.*

THOU thing of years departed!
What ages have gone by
Since here the mournful seal was set
By love and agony?

Temple and tower have moulder'd,
Empires from earth have pass'd,
And woman's heart hath left a trace
Those glories to outlast!

And childhood's fragile image,
Thus fearfully enshrined,
Survives the proud memorials rear'd
By conquerors of mankind.

Babe! wert thou brightly slumbering
Upon thy mother's breast
When suddenly the fiery tomb
Shut round each gentle guest?

A strange, dark fate o'ertook you,
Fair babe and loving heart!
One moment of a thousand pangs—
Yet better than to part!

Haply of that fond bosom
On ashes here impress'd,

* The impression of a woman's form, with an infant clasped to the bosom, found at the uncovering of Herculaneum.

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Thou wert the only treasure, child!
Whereon a hope might rest.

Perchance all vainly lavish'd
Its other love had been,
And where it trusted, nought remain'd
But thorns on which to lean.

Far better, then, to perish,
Thy form within its clasp,
Than live and lose thee, precious one!
From that impassion'd grasp.

Oh! I could pass all relics
Left by the pomps of old,
To gaze on this rude monument
Cast in affection's mould.

Love! human love! what art thou?
Thy print upon the dust
Outlives the cities of renown
Wherein the mighty trust!

Immortal, oh! immortal
Thou art, whose earthly glow
Hath given these ashes holiness—
It must, it *must* be so!

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CHRISTMAS CAROL.

O LOVELY voices of the sky,
That hymn'd the Saviour's birth!
Are ye not singing still on high,
Ye that sang "Peace on earth?"
To us yet speak the strains
Wherewith, in days gone by,
Ye bless'd the Syrian swains,
O voices of the sky!

O clear and shining light! whose beams
That hour heaven's glory shed
Around the palms, and o'er the streams,
And on the shepherd's head;
Be near, through life and death,
As in that holiest night
Of Hope, and Joy, and Faith,
O clear and shining light!

O star! which led to Him whose love
Brought down man's ransom free;
Where art thou?—Midst the hosts above
May we still gaze on thee?
In heaven thou art not set,
Thy rays earth might not dim—
Send them to guide us yet,
O star which led to Him!

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A FATHER READING THE BIBLE.*

'Twas early day, and sunlight stream'd
Soft through a quiet room,
That hush'd, but not forsaken seem'd,
Still, but with nought of gloom.
For there, serene in happy age
Whose hope is from above,
A father communed with the page
Of heaven's recorded love.

* This little poem, which, as its Author herself expressed in a letter to Mrs Joanna Baillie, was to her "a thing set apart," as being the last of her productions ever read to her beloved mother, was written at the request of a young lady, who thus made known her wish "that Mrs Hemans would embody in poetry a picture that so warmed a daughter's heart:"—

"Upon going into our dear father's sitting-room this morning, my sister and I found him deeply engaged reading his Bible, and, being unwilling to interrupt such a holy occupation, we retired to the further end of the apartment, to gaze unobserved upon the serene picture. The bright morning sun was beaming on his venerable silver hair, while his defective sight increased the earnestness with which he perused the blessed book. Our fancy led us to believe that some immortal thought was engaging his mind, for he raised his fine open brow to the light, and we felt we had never loved him more deeply. After an involuntary prayer had passed from our hearts, we whispered to each other, 'Oh! if Mrs Hemans could only see our father at this moment, her glowing pen would detain the scene; for even as we gaze upon it, the bright gleam is vanishing.'

"*December* 9, 1826."

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Pure fell the beam, and meekly bright,
On his grey holy hair,
And touch'd the page with tenderest light,
As if its shrine were there!
But oh! that patriarch's aspect shone
With something lovelier far—
A radiance all the spirit's own,
Caught not from sun or star.

Some word of life e'en then had met
His calm, benignant eye;
Some ancient promise, breathing yet
Of immortality!
Some martyr's prayer, wherein the glow
Of quenchless faith survives:
While every feature said—"*I know*
That my Redeemer lives!"

And silent stood his children by,
Hushing their very breath,
Before the solemn sanctity
Of thoughts o'ersweeping death.
Silent—yet did not each young breast
With love and reverence melt?
O! blest be those fair girls, and blest
That home where God is felt!

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THE MEETING OF THE BROTHERS.*

—"His early days
Were with him in his heart."
WORDSWORTH.

THE voices of two forest boys,
In years when hearts entwine,
Had fill'd with childhood's merry noise
A valley of the Rhine:
To rock and stream that sound was known,
Gladsome as hunter's bugle-tone.

The sunny laughter of their eyes,
There had each vineyard seen;
Up every cliff whence eagles rise,
Their bounding step had been:
Ay! their bright youth a glory threw
O'er the wild place wherein they grew.

But this, as day-spring's flush, was brief
As early bloom or dew;
Alas! 'tis but the wither'd leaf
That wears the enduring hue!
Those rocks along the Rhine's fair shore
Might girdle in their world no more.

For now on manhood's verge they stood,
And heard life's thrilling call,
As if a silver clarion woo'd
To some high festival;

* For the tale on which this little poem is founded, see *L'Hermite en Italie.*

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And parted as young brothers part,
With love in each unsullied heart.

They parted. Soon the paths divide
Wherein our steps were one,
Like river-branches, far and wide,
Dissevering as they run;
And making strangers in their course,
Of waves that had the same bright source.

Met they no more? Once more they met,
Those kindred hearts and true!
'Twas on a field of death, where yet
The battle-thunders flew,
Though the fierce day was wellnigh past,
And the red sunset smiled its last.

But as the combat closed, they found
For tender thoughts a space,
And e'en upon that bloody ground
Room for one bright embrace,
And pour'd forth on each other's neck
Such tears as warriors need not check.

The mists o'er boyhood's memory spread
All melted with those tears,
The faces of the holy dead
Rose as in vanish'd years;
The Rhine, the Rhine, the ever-blest,
Lifted its voice in each full breast!

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Oh! was it *then* a time to die?
It was!—that not in vain
The soul of childhood's purity
And peace might turn again.
A ball swept forth—'twas guided well—
Heart unto heart those brothers fell!

Happy, yes, happy thus to go!
Bearing from earth away
Affections, gifted ne'er to know
A shadow—a decay—
A passing touch of change or chill,
A breath of aught whose breath can kill.

And they, between whose sever'd souls,
Once in close union tied,
A gulf is set, a current rolls
For ever to divide;
Well may *they* envy such a lot,
Whose hearts yearn on—but mingle not.

THE LAST WISH.

"Well may I weep to leave this world—thee—all these beautiful woods, and plains, and hills."—*Lights and Shadows.*

Go to the forest-shade,
Seek thou the well-known glade,
Where, heavy with sweet dew, the violets lie,
Gleaming through moss-tufts deep,
Like dark eyes fill'd with sleep,
And bathed in hues of summer's midnight sky.

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Bring me their buds, to shed
Around my dying bed
A breath of May and of the wood's repose;
For I, in sooth, depart
With a reluctant heart,
That fain would linger where the bright sun glows.

Fain would I stay with thee!—
Alas! this may not be;
Yet bring me still the gifts of happier hours!
Go where the fountain's breast
Catches, in glassy rest,
The dim green light that pours thro' laurel bowers.

I know how softly bright,
Steep'd in that tender light,
The water-lilies tremble there e'en now;
Go to the pure stream's edge,
And from its whisp'ring sedge
Bring me those flowers to cool my fever'd brow!

Then, as in Hope's young days,
Track thou the antique maze
Of the rich garden to its grassy mound;
There is a lone white rose,
Shedding, in sudden snows,
Its faint leaves o'er the emerald turf around.

Well know'st thou that fair tree—
A murmur of the bee
Dwells ever in the honey'd lime above:

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Bring me one pearly flower
Of all its clustering shower—
For on that spot we first reveal'd our love.

Gather one woodbine bough,
Then, from the lattice low
Of the bower'd cottage which I bade thee mark,
When by the hamlet last
Through dim wood-lanes we pass'd,
While dews were glancing to the glow-worm's spark.

Haste! to my pillow bear
Those fragrant things and fair;
My hand no more may bind them up at eve—
Yet shall their odour soft
One bright dream round me waft
Of life, youth, summer—all that I must leave!

And oh! if thou wouldst ask
Wherefore thy steps I task,
The grove, the stream, the hamlet vale to trace—
'Tis that some thought of me,
When I am gone, may be
The spirit bound to each familiar place.

I bid mine image dwell
(Oh! break not thou the spell!)
In the deep wood and by the fountain-side;
Thou must not, my beloved!
Rove where we two have roved,
Forgetting her that in her spring-time died!

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FAIRY FAVOURS.

——— Give me but
Something whereunto I may bind my heart;
Something to love, to rest upon, to clasp
Affection's tendrils round.

WOULDST thou wear the gift of immortal bloom?
Wouldst thou smile in scorn at the shadowy tomb?
Drink of this cup! it is richly fraught
With balm from the gardens of Genii brought;
Drink! and the spoiler shall pass thee by,
When the young all scatter'd like rose-leaves lie.

And would not the youth of my soul be gone,
If the loved had left me, one by one?
Take back the cup that may never bless,
The gift that would make me brotherless.
How should I live, with no kindred eye
To reflect mine immortality!

Wouldst thou have empire, by sign or spell,
Over the mighty in air that dwell?
Wouldst thou call the spirits of shore and steep
To fetch thee jewels from ocean's deep?
Wave but this rod, and a viewless band,
Slaves to thy will, shall around thee stand.

And would not fear, at my coming, then
Hush every voice in the homes of men?
Would not bright eyes in my presence quail?
Young cheeks with a nameless thrill turn pale?
No gift be mine that aside would turn
The human love for whose founts I yearn!

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Wouldst thou then read through the hearts of those
Upon whose faith thou hast sought repose?
Wear this rich gem! it is charm'd to show
When a change comes over affection's glow:
Look on its flushing or fading hue,
And learn if the trusted be false or true!

Keep, keep the gem, that I still may trust,
Though my heart's wealth be but pour'd on dust!
Let not a doubt in my soul have place,
To dim the light of a loved one's face;
Leave to the earth its warm sunny smile—
That glory would pass could I look on guile!

Say, then, what boon of my power shall be,
Favour'd of spirits! pour'd forth on thee?
Thou scornest the treasures of wave and mine,
Thou wilt not drink of the cup divine,
Thou art fain with a mortal's lot to rest—
Answer me! how may I grace it best?

Oh! give me no sway o'er the powers unseen,
But a human heart where my own may lean!
A friend, one tender and faithful friend,
Whose thoughts' free current with mine may blend;
And, leaving not either on earth alone,
Bid the bright, calm close of our lives be one!

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ANNOTATION

ON

"RECORDS OF WOMAN," &c.

We feel certain that every admirer of the genius of Mrs Hemans will be obliged to us for here reprinting, almost at length, the admirable Critique on her writings which appeared in No. XCIX of the *Edinburyh Review*. The acumen, the taste, and elegance of Lord Jeffrey, are evident throughout.

"Women, we fear, cannot do everything; nor even everything they attempt. But what they can do, they do, for the most part, excellently—and much more frequently with an absolute and perfect success, than the aspirants of our rougher and more ambitious sex. They cannot, we think, represent naturally the fierce and sullen passions of men—nor their coarser vices—nor even scenes of actual business or contention—and the mixed motives, and strong and faulty characters, by which affairs of moment are usually conducted on the great theatre of the world. For much of this they are disqualified by the delicacy of their training and habits, and the still more disabling delicacy which pervades their conceptions and feelings; and from much they are excluded by their actual inexperience of the realities they might wish to describe—by their substantial and incurable ignorance of business—of the way in which serious affairs are actually managed—and the true nature of the agents and impulses that give movement and direction to the stronger currents of ordi-

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nary life. Perhaps they are also incapable of long moral or political investigations, where many complex and indeterminate elements are to be taken into account, and a variety of opposite probabilities to be weighed before coming to a conclusion. They are generally too impatient to get at the ultimate results, to go well through with such discussions; and either stop short at some imperfect view of the truth, or turn aside to repose in the shadow of some plausible error. This, however, we are persuaded, arises entirely from their being seldom set on such tedious tasks. Their proper and natural business is the practical regulation of private life, in all its bearings, affections, and concerns; and the questions with which they have to deal in that most important department, though often of the utmost difficulty and nicety, involve, for the most part, but few elements; and may generally be better described as delicate than intricate—requiring for their solution rather a quick tact and fine perception than a patient or laborious examination. For the same reason, they rarely succeed in long works, even on subjects the best suited to their genius; their natural training rendering them equally averse to long doubt and long labour.

"For all other intellectual efforts, however, either of the understanding or the fancy, and requiring a thorough knowledge either of man's strength or his weakness, we apprehend them to be, in all respects, as well qualified as their brethren of the stronger sex; while, in their perceptions of grace, propriety, ridicule—their power of detecting artifice, hypocrisy, and affectation—the force and promptitude of their sympathy, and their capacity of noble and devoted attachment, and of the efforts and sacrifices it may require, they are, beyond all doubt, our superiors.

"Their business being, as we have said, with actual or social life, and the colours it receives from the conduct and dispositions of individuals, they unconsciously acquire, at a very early age, the finest perception of character and manners, and are almost as soon instinctively schooled in the deep and dangerous learning of feeling and emotion; while the very minuteness with which they make and me-

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ditate on these interesting observations, and the finer shades and variations of sentiment which are thus treasured and recorded, trains their whole faculties to a nicety and precision of operation, which often discloses itself to advantage in their application to studies of a very different character. When women, accordingly, have turned their minds—as they have done but too seldom—to the exposition or arrangement of any branch of knowledge, they have commonly exhibited, we think, a more beautiful accuracy, and a more uniform and complete justness of thinking, than their less discriminating brethren. There is a finish and completeness about everything they put out of their hands, which indicates not only an inherent taste for elegance and neatness, but a habit of nice observation, and singular exactness of judgment.

"It has been so little the fashion, at any time, to encourage women to write for publication, that it is more difficult than it should be to prove these truths by examples. Yet there are enough, within the reach of a very careless and superficial glance over the open field of literature, to enable us to explain, at least, and illustrate, if not entirely to verify, our assertions. No *man*, we will venture to say, could have written the letters of Madame de Sevigné, or the novels of Miss Austin, or the hymns and early lessons of Mrs Barbauld, or the conversations of Mrs Marcet. These performances, too, are not only essentially and intensely feminine, but they are, in our judgment, decidedly more perfect than any masculine productions with which they can be brought into comparison. They accomplish more completely all the ends at which they aim, and are worked out with a gracefulness and felicity of execution which excludes all idea of failure, and entirely satisfies the expectations they may have raised. We might easily have added to these instances. There are many parts of Miss Edgeworth's earlier stories, and of Miss Mitford's sketches and descriptions, and not a little of Mrs Opie's, that exhibit the same fine and penetrating spirit of observation, the same softness and delicacy of hand, and unerring truth of delineation, to which we have alluded as characterising the pure

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specimens of female art. The same distinguishing traits of a woman's spirit are visible through the grief and the piety of Lady Russell, and the gaiety, the spite, and the venturesomeness of Lady Mary Wortley. We have not as yet much female poetry; but there is a truly feminine tenderness, purity, and elegance, in the Psyche of Mrs Tighe, and in some of the smaller pieces of Lady Craven. On some of the works of Madame de Staël—her *Corinne* especially—there is a still deeper stamp of the genius of her sex. Her pictures of its boundless devotedness—its depth and capacity of suffering—its high aspirations—its painful irritability, and inextinguishable thirst for emotion, are powerful specimens of that morbid anatomy of the heart, which no hand but that of a woman's was fine enough to have laid open, or skilful enough to have recommended to our sympathy and love. There is the same exquisite and inimitable delicacy, if not the same power, in many of the happier passages of Madame de Souza and Madame Cottin—to say nothing of the more lively and yet melancholy records of Madame de Staël, during her long penance in the Court of the Duchesse de Maine.

"But we are preluding too largely, and must come at once to the point, to which the very heading of this article has already admonished the most careless of our readers that we are tending. We think the poetry of Mrs Hemans a fine exemplification of female poetry; and we think it has much of the perfection which we have ventured to ascribe to the happier productions of female genius.

"It may not be the best imaginable poetry, and may not indicate the very highest or most commanding genius; but it embraces a great deal of that which gives the very best poetry its chief power of pleasing, and would strike us, perhaps, as more impassioned and exalted, if it were not regulated and harmonised by the most beautiful taste. It is infinitely sweet, elegant, and tender—touching, perhaps, and contemplative, rather than vehement and overpowering; and not only finished throughout with an exquisite delicacy, and even serenity of execution, but informed with a purity and loftiness of feeling, and a cer-

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tain sober and humble tone of indulgence and piety, which must satisfy all judgments, and allay the apprehensions of those who are most afraid of the passionate exaggerations of poetry. The diction is always beautiful, harmonious, and free; and the themes, though of infinite variety, uniformly treated with a grace, originality, and judgment, which mark the same master-hand. These themes she has borrowed, with the peculiar interest and imagery that belong to them, from the legends of different nations, and the most opposite states of society; and has contrived to retain much of what is interesting and peculiar in each of them, without adopting, along with it, any of the revolting or extravagant excesses which may characterise the taste or manners of the people or the age from which it has been derived. She has thus transfused into her German or Scandinavian legends, the imaginative and daring tone of the originals, without the mystical exaggerations of the one, or the painful fierceness and coarseness of the other — she has preserved the clearness and elegance of the French, without their coldness or affectation — and the tenderness and simplicity of the early Italians, without their diffuseness or languor. Though occasionally expatiating, somewhat fondly and at large, amongst the sweets of her own planting, there is, on the whole, a great condensation and brevity in most of her pieces, and, almost without exception, a most judicious and vigorous conclusion. The great merit, however, of her poetry, is undoubtedly in its tenderness and its beautiful imagery. The first requires no explanation; but we must be allowed to add a word as to the peculiar charm and character of the latter.

"It has always been our opinion, that the very essence of poetry, apart from the pathos, the wit, or the brilliant description which may be embodied in it, but may exist equally in prose, consists in the fine perception and vivid expression of that subtle and mysterious analogy which exists between the physical and the moral world—which makes outward things and qualities the natural types and emblems of inward gifts and emotions, and leads us to

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ascribe life and sentiment to everything that interests us in the aspects of external nature. The feeling of this analogy, obscure and inexplicable as the theory of it may be, is so deep and universal in our nature, that it has stamped itself on the ordinary language of men of every kindred and speech: and that to such an extent, that one half of the epithets by which we familiarly designate moral and physical qualities, are in reality so many metaphors, borrowed reciprocally, upon this analogy, from those opposite forms of existence. The very familiarity, however, of the expression, in these instances, takes away its poetical effect—and indeed, in substance, its metaphorical character. The original sense of the word is entirely forgotten in the derivative one to which it has succeeded; and it requires some etymological recollection to convince us that it was originally nothing else than a typical or analogical illustration. Thus we talk of a penetrating understanding, and a furious blast—a weighty argument, and a gentle stream—without being at all aware that we are speaking in the language of poetry, and transferring qualities from one extremity of the sphere of being to another. In these cases, accordingly, the metaphor, by ceasing to be felt, in reality ceases to exist; and the analogy being no longer intimated, of course can produce no effect. But whenever it is intimated, it does produce an effect; and that effect, we think, is poetry.

"It has substantially two functions, and operates in two directions. In the *first* place, it strikes vividly out, and flashes at once on our minds, the conception of an inward feeling or emotion, which it might otherwise have been difficult to convey, by the presentment of some bodily form or quality, which is instantly felt to be its true representative; and enables us to fix and comprehend it with a force and clearness not otherwise attainable: and, in the *second* place, it vivifies dead and inanimate matter with the attributes of living and sentient mind; and fills the whole visible universe around us with objects of interest and sympathy, by tinging them with the hues of life, and associating them with our own passions and affections. This magical oper-

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ation the poet, too, performs, for the most part in one of two ways — either by the direct agency of similes and metaphors, more or less condensed or developed, or by the mere graceful presentment of such visible objects on the scene of his passionate dialogues or adventures, as partake of the character of the emotion he wishes to excite, and thus form an appropriate accompaniment or preparation for its direct indulgence or display. The former of those methods has perhaps been most frequently employed, and certainly has most attracted attention. But the latter, though less obtrusive, and perhaps less frequently resorted to of set purpose, is, we are inclined to think, the most natural and efficacious of the two; and is often adopted, we believe, unconsciously by poets of the highest order— the predominant emotion of their minds overflowing spontaneously on all the objects which present themselves to their fancy, and calling out from them, and colouring with its own hues, those that are naturally emblematic of its character, and in accordance with its general expression. It would be easy to show how habitually this is done by Shakespeare and Milton especially, and how much many of their finest passages are indebted both for force and richness of effect to this general and diffusive harmony of the external character of their scenes with the passions of their living agents — this harmonising and appropriate glow with which they kindle the whole surrounding atmosphere, and bring all that strikes the sense into unison with all that touches the heart.

"But it is more to our present purpose to say, that we think the fair writer before us is eminently a mistress of this poetical secret; and, in truth, it was solely for the purpose of illustrating this great charm and excellence in her imagery, that we have ventured upon this little dissertation. Almost all her poems are rich with fine descriptions, and studded over with images of visible beauty. But these are never idle ornaments: all her pomps have a meaning; and her flowers and her gems are arranged, as they are said to be among Eastern lovers, so as to speak the language of truth and of passion. This is peculiarly

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remarkable in some little pieces, which seem at first sight to be purely descriptive—but are soon found to tell upon the heart, with a deep moral and pathetic impression. But it is a truth nearly as conspicuous in the greater part of her productions, where we scarcely meet with any striking sentiment that is not ushered in by some such symphony of external nature, and scarcely a lovely picture that does not serve as a foreground to some deep or lofty emotion. We may illustrate this proposition, we think, by opening either of these little volumes at random, and taking what they first present to us.—The following exquisite lines, for example, on a Palm-tree in an English garden :—

> 'It waved not through an Eastern sky,
> Beside a fount of Araby,' &c.

"The following, which the author has named, 'Graves of a Household,' has rather less of external scenery, but serves, like the others, to show how well the graphic and pathetic may be made to set off each other :—

> 'They grew in beauty side by side,
> They fill'd one home with glee,' &c.

"We have taken these pieces chiefly on account of their shortness; but it would not be fair to Mrs Hemans not to present our readers with one longer specimen — and to give a portion of her graceful narrative along with her pathetic descriptions. This story, of 'The Lady of the Castle,' is told, we think, with great force and sweetness :—

> 'Thou see'st her pictured with her shining hair,
> (Famed were these tresses in Provençal song),' &c.

"The following sketch of 'Joan of Arc in Rheims,' is in a loftier and more ambitious vein; but sustained with equal grace, and as touching in its solemn tenderness. We can afford to extract but a part of it :—

> —— 'Within, the light,
> Through the rich gloom of pictured windows flowing,' &c.

"There are several strains of a more passionate character; especially in the two poetical epistles from Lady

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Arabella Stuart and Properzia Rossi. We shall venture to give a few lines from the former. The Lady Arabella was of royal descent; and having excited the fears of our pusillanimous James by a secret union with the Lord Seymour, was detained in a cruel captivity, by that heartless monarch, till the close of her life—during which she is supposed to have indited this letter to her lover from her prison-house:—

> 'My friend, my friend! where art thou? Day by day,
> Gliding, like some dark mournful stream, away,' &c.

"The following, though it has no very distinct object or moral, breathes, we think, the very spirit of poetry, in its bright and vague picturings, and is well entitled to the name it bears—'An Hour of Romance:'

> 'There were thick leaves above me and around,
> And low sweet sighs, like those of childhood's sleep,' &c.

"There is great sweetness in the following portion of a little poem on a 'Girls' School:'—

> 'Oh! joyous creatures! that will sink to rest,
> Lightly, when those pure orisons are done,' &c.

"There is a fine and stately solemnity in these lines on 'The Lost Pleiad':—

> 'Hath the night lost a gem, the regal night?
> She wears her crown of old magnificence,' &c.

"The following on 'The Dying Improvisatore,' have a rich lyrical cadence, and glow of deep feeling:—

> 'Never, oh! never more,
> On thy Rome's purple heaven mine eye shall dwell,' &c.

"But we must stop here. There would be no end of our extracts, if we were to yield to the temptation of noting down every beautiful passage which arrests us in turning over the leaves of the volumes before us. We ought to recollect, too, that there are few to whom our pages are likely to come, who are not already familiar with their beauties; and, in fact, we have made these extracts, less with the presumptuous belief that we are introducing Mrs

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Hemans for the first time to the knowledge or admiration of our readers, than from a desire of illustrating, by means of them, the singular felicity in the choice and employment of her imagery, of which we have already spoken so much at large;—that fine accord she has established between the world of sense and of soul—that delicate blending of our deep inward emotions with their splendid symbols and emblems without."]

THE END.

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